Film
QUARTERLY

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FILM QUARTERLY (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly at the subscription prices given below by the University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720. Second-class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Film Quarterly,** University of California Press, Berkeley CA 94720. $3.00 per copy, $12.00 per year for individuals; $24.00 per year for institutions. Subscribers outside USA add $3.00 for postage. Domestic claims for nonreceipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Thereafter, the regular back issue rate will be charged for replacement. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed. Back issues available at $5.00. Editor: Ernest Callenbach. Assistant to the Editor: Bonnie Dehler. New York Editor: William Johnson. Los Angeles Editor: Michael Dempsey. Boston Editor: Randall Conrad. London Editor: Colin Young. Rome Editor: Gideon Bachmann. Advisory Editorial Board: Leo Braudy, Andries Deinum, John Fell, Brian Henderson, Albert Johnson, Marsha Kinder, Neal Oxenhandler. Views expressed in signed articles are those of the authors. Indexed in **Art Index, Book Review Index, Film Literature Index, Humanities Index, International Index to Film Periodicals, Monthly Cumulating Periodical Index,** and **Popular Periodical Index.** Printed in U.S.A. Type: Freedmen's Organization, Los Angeles. Printing: Malloy Lithographing. © 1987 by the University of California. Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-1966) can be obtained from the University of California Press.

MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Light Shining in Darkness: Roland Joffe on *The Mission*

Anyone educated at an American Catholic secondary school during the 1950s will recall how the nuns and the priests presented inspirational homilies (corrosively lampooned in Marco Bellocchio's *In the Name of the Father*) about the Church's foreign missionaries and their quests, often ending in martyrdom, to bring Christ to the heathens of what no one then called the Third World. But as that term entered the language, these missionaries came to seem less like saintly idealists and more like colonialist shock troops softening up "the natives" on behalf of military and economic ravagers. During recent years, "liberation" priests in South and Central America have been borrowing Marxist precepts, taking government posts, outraging the theologically conservative Holy See of Pope John Paul II. Even so, according to the revisionist view, Catholic missionaries were (and are) at best dupes or fools, at worst co-conspirators in the process of exploitation.

The Mission, written by Robert Bolt and directed by Roland Joffe, examines a complicated clash of both ecclesiastical and political interests in South America during the mid-eighteenth century. Spain and Portugal fight over territory that includes several sanctuaries founded by Jesuits who have been converting Guarani Indians and establishing them in what might be called semi-socialistic communities, where they grow and sell crops, make violins and furniture, and live as Catholics without altogether abandoning their own traditions. Merchants, politicians, slave-traders, and the Pope order the Jesuits to cede the missions to Portugal, as stipulated by the Treaty of Madrid (1750), lest their order be expelled from all of Europe. Two Jesuit leaders, the unworldly Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) and the martial former slaver Father Mendoza (Robert De Niro), aid the resistance in opposite ways but with one calamitous result: the Battle of Caibale (1756), during which they, several other Jesuits, and some 1500 Indians die. A papal legate, Cardinal Altamirano (Ray McAnally), who shares the blame for the massacre, is left to meditate on his own spiritual death and the hope that history will not forget his victims.

Addressing the ambiguities of idealism amid greed and power politics, *The Mission* and the circumstances of its production also embody them. Like *El Cid,* it is a moving eulogy for a brand of heroism that, beautiful and uplifting though it may be, is almost certainly a historical dinosaur. Like *Lawrence of Arabia,* it alertly shows how a more modern version of such heroism becomes a tool of the very forces it seeks to transcend. However, besides being an account of colonialism's ravages, *The Mission* is also a $20 million-plus superproduction that brought dozens of Western moviemakers into lands still profoundly marked by that very colonialism. Many will surely believe that, even if they share the good intentions of the missionaries the film depicts, Joffe and his team inexorably re-oppress the people with overbearing film technology and appropriate their story for a grandiose prestige spectacle, an example of what a contemporary Jesuit, Daniel Berrigan, has cited as "the 'magniloquent imagination,' a sickness of spirit deep and wild, ubiquitous and assaulting, in the media and cinema."

That musing comes from his brief, trenchant *The Mission: A Film Journal* (Harper & Row, 1986), written while he advised the film-makers and played a small role in the film. Everywhere he discovers ambiguities that the picture portrays and enacts, akin to those Dennis Hopper tried to wrestle to earth in *The Last Movie*—his confused, hallucinatory take on the interaction of primitive people and modern image-makers. Moved by Joffe's epic portrayal of Cambodia's destruction in his first film, Berrigan still notes, "Several in the group, including myself, confessed to being beaten about mercilessly by the images of *The Killing Fields.* What comes of it all? Another instance in which massive horror has become the texture of life itself?

Depleted emotions? Numbed purpose? A sense of hopelessness?'' He looks skeptically, even scornfully, at the cast and the baggage of stardom yet also writes:

I have a sense that no doubts can tarnish: that our stars are men of integrity. In at least this limited sense they struggle and mull and reflect and study, all in order to give a human face to tragic events, a face capable of tears, nuances, purpose, and faithfulness. And more; in the present instance, they labor hard to convey such human drives and stalls and reverses, because they recognize the beauty of the lives of the missioners. This, their labor and self-giving, consoles me and calms my doubts.

As for Joffe:

''You are the film. Roland offers the actors a brief ferverino. . . . But if we are the film, what of him? Guiding spirit? Bearer of good news, holy and secular? Encourager? Wiper away of tears? Stern exactor? Friend? Father confessor? All and any. Indeed, he appears to me at times the only authentic Jesuit of us all.

A cofounder of the Young Vic and a former member of the National Theatre under Laurence Olivier, Joffe worked in British television for many years on local news programs, soap operas (*Coronation Street*), mini-series (*The Stars Look Down, Bill Brand*), and plays (writing *The Spongers* and *United Kingdom*). Producer David Puttnam (who now runs Columbia Pictures) hired him to direct *The Killing Fields.* Robert Bolt wrote *The Mission* during the mid-1970s at the behest of another producer, Fernando Ghia, who had read of the Guarani-Jesuit story. Eventually, the four of them joined together to make the film, which Joffe spoke about during a visit to Los Angeles.

•

Did you have to change the historical events very much?

We tried to change as little as we could. The two priests are absolutely an invention. There were individual Jesuits who took the stand that they took. There is debate on whether there were Jesuits who actually died during the event. There were 70 Jesuits who trained the Guarani to fight and stayed with them while they did fight. In addition, other priests who actually worked on the side of the peasantry and actually felt that they should actually go into battle, that their ministry was important, and they sacrificed their lives for it.

This ties in with ''liberation theology'' and priests there today.

Roland Joffe during the filming of THE MISSION

Absolutely. The film in that sense is intimately concerned with the struggle for liberation in liberation theology, and that's why the historical perspective is very important, because what it's actually saying is that these people haven't come out of nowhere. The tradition of the worker-priest in Paris immediately after the war, a lot of movements that became schisms, the Albigensians or others, who were not only motivated by a different eschatological view of the meaning of life but also by a political sense and an economic sense, that they felt that they had to be responsible for the daily lives of the people. That's an old tradition in the Church, and I thought it was important that people appreciated that, without giving a historical lecture about it.

The film seems to go through three or four large shifts of focus. Then at the end it becomes a large canvas with all the elements integrated into it.

That is absolutely what we were trying to do with the film. We didn't want to do a character study of Father Gabriel and Mendoza, looking at their psychology and taking a totally naturalistic line and only following the story in the sense that they played in it. What we wanted to do was gradually build up the elements, because in a way they counted for them-

selves but they also counted for other forces. The narrative could shift from A and then across to B and then to C. When you actually got to the conclusion, everything then began to form into a shape, and yet that shape didn't have a kind of crude narrative link. You actually saw that the point at which people were important was the point at which they were exercising a certain amount of power. For the Indians, too. We didn't make an anthropological study of Indians. We allowed the Indians to grow very gradually in their own way and to gradually appear and to find a point where they began to achieve a meaning, which is when they said no [to the Spanish, the French, and papal authority]. And at that point, the priests had to look at *their* meaning: "Are we here as colonizers, or are we actually here to represent these people? And who is to lead?"

The question is not only "Are we here to represent these people?"—they finally decide that they are—but also how. You show two ways: training them militarily and fighting alongside them, or a quietist, faith-oriented approach. And both of them come to a fully disastrous end; neither can be said to "work."

Well, this is the great debating point of the film. For me, they do work. What the film is trying to come to terms with, apart from ambiguity, is the sense in which a struggle defeated is not a struggle lost. The point is to have had it. The motive appears as a coda, when the girl comes and takes the violin. An image like that is not a cheap nod of the head towards optimism. What it's actually saying is: "These children, having been through this experience, do want to select from the West." As Indians do. They want something out of the culture. The question is what they choose. They don't choose the crucifix. They don't actually choose any furniture. They choose a broken violin because the violin for them symbolizes something that they actually want.

But there's an alternative, which I think is one of the most effective things in the film: the very end of Mendoza's life. It reminds me of something in Days of Heaven, *the last images the farmer sees before he dies. In both cases, it's a vision of chaos. Even more so in your case, because Mendoza sees the troops running wild, killing children, destroying everything. His state of mind as he's passing into death must be something like despair.*

Well, I think it wouldn't be. I think there would still be a sense of meaning, a sense that, yes, it has all gone wrong, at this point the forces against them are too strong. But it's still the Indians who lead, and although he's seeing Gabriel, he's seeing Gabriel surrounded by Indians, and he's seeing the Indians marching courageously towards people who are shooting them. He sees that they don't break, he sees that Father Gabriel maintains his faith. I think that in that moment he truly understands love, he truly understands what love of the world is, that the world is this complex, ambiguous place. It's very silly to dig one's head in the sand and pretend to a kind of a view of the improvement of human beings through history. And yet if you really look at life, you have to get between two emotions, and the film stumbles towards making that point: that there is something supremely beautiful about what has gone on on this stone that hangs about in space; there's also something supremely, *supremely* destructive about it, and something that's supremely tragic. The question, of course, is what we make of those things. If we take a purely materialist view, I mean a *purely* materialist view, it may be that we will give way to a certain despair and a certain persistent cynicism. Or we may take the view that in the search for meaning we may actually find meaning, though we may find no reason why. It also involves the ability to understand death, which is, after all, the problem we've all got to start with willy-nilly.

Just before he is shot, Gabriel looks very much like the crazed religious fanatic in the John Ford film, The Lost Patrol, *whom we last see marching up a dune to his death, holding a cross, totally out of his mind. Maybe it's a kind of spiritual ecstasy, but I think some people might read it as madness.*

Oh, I think that would be valid. I don't think that it's mad, it's ambiguous. Any gesture like that has got an ambiguity to it. It may have an absolute logic. [Benigno] Aquino's return [to the Philippines] had an absolute logic to it, as I think Gabriel's sense has an absolute logic. He doesn't ask the Indians to go through that. Those men come and sit by him. He answers them in the only way that he can. At that point, when there are no more cards to play, then logic and madness run very close together, in a sense, because there is no reason any more. At that point, just at that point, there will be a conclu-

Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) leads converted Guarani Indians in passive resistance to Portuguese troops

sion drawn to all your actions. You have no idea what's next. Gabriel has no idea. The outside observer, in a sense, has no idea. And yet what is important absolutely in both those moments for both of them is the meaning of their actions, as it is indeed the meaning of the actions of the Indians at that point. And that's their gift, that's the thing that will stay in the world.

The realm above the Iguazu Falls suggests some kind of utopia or Shangri-La or peaceable kingdom, a dream that seems to be embedded in human nature of a lost golden age. This also comes across in what we often hear about Cambodia before all the disasters.

That's right. There was a French psychologist who explained in great detail his theory that Cambodia was destroyed precisely because it *was* a paradise, that this country never had a chance because everybody hated it, because its very existence was a criticism. It's precisely that that makes the Indians attractive. The Indians are the ones who give all the time. They actually give Mendoza his redemption. Gabriel helps, but it *comes* from the Indians.

Other Robert Bolt films, such as Lawrence of Arabia *and* The Bounty, *also deal with so-called civilized people, usually Europeans, coming to grips with something by being immersed in the world of so-called primitive people. So does* The Killing Fields.

I think that's why we were attracted to each other. I was always very impressed by Conrad, because what Conrad was in touch with was the duality in the colonial experience. The colonial experience for sure had an economic base. On the other hand, there was something supremely hopeful psychologically about this journey into the jungle that I think equally attracted people. People wanted to return. The question is the quality of their returning. For some, what they were actually doing was finding that in more primitive surroundings they had a certain approval to express their deepest angers that this world was no longer theirs, their deepest fury. Other people went specifically to find a way of listening to their own harmonies and used their reason as a lever to pry off the dead weight of a certain kind of civilization. They could use that vision of how the world was, which they

would idealize a little bit. But in some ways, and this is why it was so potent, they didn't have to idealize it much. There *was* a genuinely communal life that they found, particularly in South America. And there genuinely was a populist society, there genuinely was a society of totally different sexual mores, ways of behaving, that they found very disturbing, very beautiful as well.

You show political forces advancing for very specific reasons. But Cardinal Altamirano as narrator presents another interesting motive: that the desire to seek or create utopias on earth offends the Church because it directs people away from the real utopia in the next world.

Oh, yes. The Cardinal was a very interesting man because he is more worldly than anybody else in the film. He is also more hamstrung in an extraordinary way. Because he knows more, he actually finds it that much more difficult to really find a decision that sits with his sense of justice.

He says at one point, "I'm going to follow my conscience, what else?" But does he?

No. I don't think he does.

If he had done so, would the ending have been any different?

Actually, I think it might have been. I think that's what the very last look at the end of the film [after the end credits] is saying: "I did this. Now you know what happens when you do that."

In other words, it's not just forces clashing without anyone in control.

I think that's very important. The Cardinal hitherto has hidden behind forces, actually.

He's a very sophisticated, subtle voice and mind, and yet he ends up sanctioning the slaughter for very intelligent, ironic, worldly reasons.

That's right. I think the Cardinal realizes that he has actually represented an image of sacrifice that maybe he now has doubts about: the sacrifice of others to maintain the structure of the Church. I think the Cardinal was threatened by Gabriel's innocence, in that Gabriel gets to the heart of the moral dilemma. And to a man who has to deal in the world pragmatically, that is a source of danger. I think that, in modern terms, politicians hide more and more under the cloak of pragmatism: "Well, we have to do this because we're politicians, and this is the way round it goes." And morality becomes more and more portable. We know the dangers we suffer from there. Although the other way has its own dangers, too. That's what the film is about: Is there any way that we make a stand? Do we make a stand for anything?

In Film Comment [*"Amazon Grace," Sept./Oct. 1986*], *Harlan Kennedy writes about what he considers the unwillingness or the inability of* The Mission *(and other recent films, like* Greystoke *and* The Emerald Forest, *which deal with encounters between civilized and primitive people) to make the Indians anything other than beautiful, general symbols of lost innocence. How do you feel about that?*

I would be very surprised if this man who feels that we are generalizing about Indians has ever met any. I'd be very intrigued to see whether he has. Those Indians are in the film actually as they are. I didn't alter them, manipulate them, or anything. The innocence that they have, that's precisely their problem, that they are open, they are trusting. Listen, in their personal relations, they may have problems, they may be jealous, they may not be jealous, it's of no importance. I don't show anybody's individual psychology particularly (well, we do with De Niro, some motivation). But the question is not a naturalistic study, the question is, "How are they? How do they appear?" The communality that they have in the film is the communality that they have today, and that was the most important thing to bring into the film. Of course, in a sense they are a symbol. For us, they *do* count for something because of the stage in their civilization that they are at. But the point of the film is not to say that Indians should be left as they are. It actually says Indians *want* contact. You could equally attack the film and say "Oh, why do the Indians take to Christianity? That's wrong." It's neither wrong nor right—they *did. And* they liked it, *and* they wanted to keep it, *and* they wanted to live in the missions. Now we can go blue in the face saying that's not the right thing for them to do. But you sit and read the letters and what they actually said about living in those missions, and they wanted to live there. Now from hindsight, you can see the duality of that. In a sense, the Jesuits opened the door for colonization. As Cabeza [the film's Spanish territorial governor] says, they manipulated the Indians by claiming that they had immortal souls and that those immortal souls, in a sense,

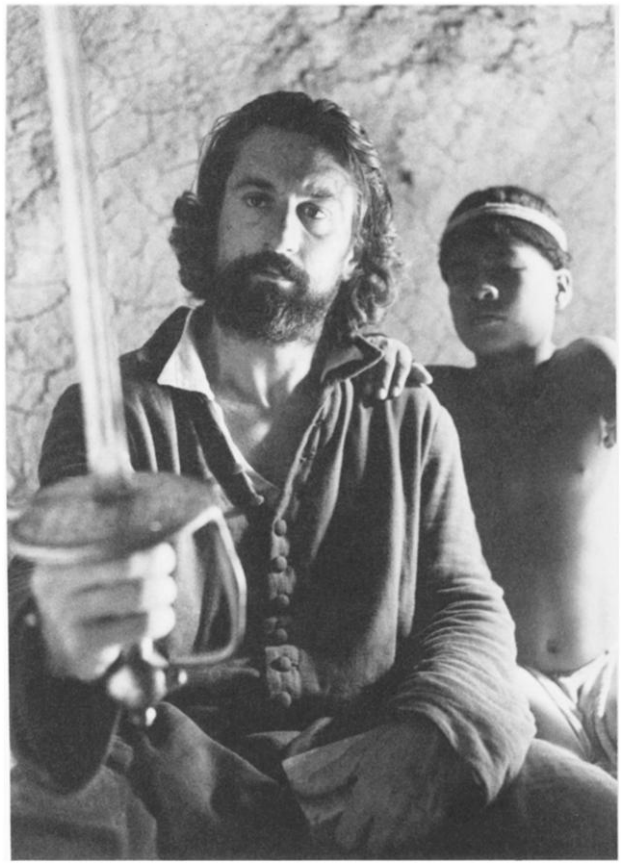
were a way of training the Indians to a certain point of view. Cabeza's quite right when he makes that comment. *Yet* the Jesuits *did* protect the Indians when it came to it. *That's* as important to recognize. I don't think those Indians in the film were at all idealized. I think they're absolutely as fundamentally fearless as they are [portrayed], and that, to me, is proved by the scene in which they stand up to Altamirano. At that point, the audience and the Indians fuse absolutely. I think the criticism is a valid criticism generally. Applied to this film, it's trite and convenient and way off the mark. What people may find confusing is the fact that the Indians made their choice for the Jesuits. Because you hold the moral high ground, and because part of your moral high ground is to say, "Modern civilization is bad; therefore, Indians shouldn't have it," doesn't mean that you can then afford to ignore the rights of the Indians. I think that's intensely paternalistic. What the film is arguing, and I think it argues it very clearly, is *they* will choose. They have the right to choose *and* they have the right to go against what you think is in their particular interest.

Including not maintaining themselves as a pristine, primitive group of people somewhere in an untainted jungle.

In the end, if you follow that argument to its logical extension, you then keep Indians in a zoo.

How did highly sophisticated actors like Irons and De Niro find ways to work in that setting with the Indians?

Well, for me that would be one of the lovely congruities of the practice of the film and the story. In a sense, what you look for as a director is how you can create a world in which actors' imaginations can live. They came down early before the film. People lived in hotels. There is a level at which you say, "You're an actor, and you can go home and have a comfortable night." Anybody who wanted to stay in the village could, and I think everybody spent at least a couple of nights. But to me, it has much more to do with interpersonal relations, what actually happened during the day, the feelings that were generated between everybody. Certainly, working with the Indians, as did working with Dan Berrigan, gave the actors a context, gave them a world. I think Bob had a very, very interesting challenge, which I happen to believe he surmounted wonderfully. How did he stop being a New Yorker? How do we create a De Niro who was born in the eighteenth century? And always he's going to be De Niro, because there are elements of De Niro that are important to the film. He is playing a man 200 years before his time, but the way he moves and the way he is is not stiff, it's not wooden, it's not an act. He's there in that world. He's one of the few American actors who has managed to do that. He did it various ways. He did it physically by learning to fence. The concentration of fencing gave him a totally different way of moving, rather than the sort of tight, rigid New York walk, which is to do with being on pavements and very slightly hunched and being on the move because you might be attacked at any corner. It gave him a kind of solidity and a strength, because fencing is actually based on control, and that's what De Niro began to discover. Also, the challenge for him was that this was to be a film of being, in which the arguments were to be made through being, through visuals, through what people were doing, not necessarily through dialogue.



Mendoza (Robert De Niro) decides to defend the Guarani with arms

There is a clean, hard attack that he brings to

his scenes, which is different from his portrayal of a more modern priest in True Confessions, *which seems more diffuse.*

That's why I believe Bob actually found that character. If it had been more "modern," in the sense of being umm-ed and ah-ed and become a searching for words, then we'd never have made that break. That character had a certain simplicity. That character saw things emotionally and in rather sharp ways, and he found a way of doing that, and therefore what he says is absolutely to the point, there's a clarity to it. That, for me, is the mark of his performance. At home, I have a still of him from the beginning of the film and a still from that last moment when he sees the rope being cut, and if you put those two together, that's a whole journey, that's a magnificent journey the man has made in one film in himself.

Jeremy Irons has said that going through this experience both challenged and confirmed his values. But he didn't say what he meant by that. Do you know?

As far as I can speak for Jeremy, I think that what he began to learn about film acting was that film acting simply asks you to be. And being is at the same time simple and immensely difficult because it asks you to be true in your emotions, it asks you not to fake them, it asks you not to construct them, it asks you simply to create a situation in which you are freed to be yourself. Artistically what you're doing is creating a world around yourself that colors the way that you are, that colors the being. So it's not just you, Jeremy Irons, it is Jeremy Irons as Gabriel. An example of that is the way he says, "God is love." That isn't Jeremy Irons speaking, in a sense, and yet it has all the commitment of Jeremy as well. At that point, Gabriel and Jeremy become one person.

He did a wonderful job of catching a very straightforward, idealistic personality or soul without making it mawkish.

I think the fact that he didn't make it mawkish is what Jeremy means by confirming his values, that in a sense you can achieve a certain kind of purity without having to be a saint, and you don't have to decorate it with costumes, sets, and scenery, and thinking about what a man like that would be like. You could simply allow yourself to be him.

The location work must have been horrendous.

Well, it was very complex. For me, it was very, very important that the camerawork would take you into the world. The camera moves are simple, but in fact they're quite complicated. The camera's actually very rarely still. The selection of lenses is very important because I don't want the camera movement to pull people away from the film, and some camera movement can do that, because you suddenly feel that someone's pushing your shoulder all the time.

When Mendoza kills his brother, there is a simultaneous moving towards and away from him.

That's right, and all things are coming into focus and going out of focus, and everything is dropping away, there's just the act. And yet one doesn't want to do those things too theoretically because those can also put people off. I storyboard everything, pretty much the entire film. I'm not a wonderful drawer, but in doing the drawings I learn about the characters because I have to think, "What expression is here? What does this scene mean? Do I want to be close to him here? Do I want to be far away from him here? Do I shoot this in one continuing master?" And the developing master shot I use a lot in the film, which is that the story is told through developing camera movements that bring you into a slightly different relationship. And then at points of tension there's a little very fast cutting, and that's to do with the tension of the way those two balance off each other that's quite important. I always think film-making is very like writing a poem, closer to writing a poem than a novel, in that you're dealing with time and you're dealing with the balance of image to image, you're asking people to make leaps, quantum leaps, between one image and another. So you always get to a point with a film, which to me is one of the most creative points going, when you have everything assembled, you have your story laid out. It's too long, it's too lumbering, it's overimaged, you've mixed the thing as rich as you can. And then there comes the toughest time of all, which is when you have to sharpen the knife.

Did you have to lose any major sequences?

I don't think we lost a major sequence. We trimmed some down.

Mendoza's background, for instance, is laid in tersely.

We had a little bit more of that, but we always

THE MISSION: *Portuguese soldiers slaughter the Guarani*

wanted that to be bold and simple. I wanted it to be a little like a Rubik's Cube; it's simple until you start opening it out.

How do you organize the huge logistical episodes that you had to deal with not only here but in The Killing Fields, *making everything crazed and chaotic but also keeping control?*

When I'm discussing it with my operator, sometimes I show him the storyboard. Once the shot, the tracks, or the crane or whatever, is set up, the orchestration of how we go from A to B is absolutely crucial, so there is chaos, but people are following what is happening in the chaos. I storyboard what the camera is going to see, and then around that I begin to set up what I call the atmosphere, the world in which the camera is going to live, which will go on on all sides of the camera, really. I allow it to kind of cook and build, which is a thing I read about Chaplin doing. I sometimes get the extras going long before the shot's started so that the thing is spontaneous, it's achieved its own life, given that you've got enough action to keep it going for the 50 seconds or the two minutes that the shot's got to last. I know a director who watched *The Killing Fields* who said, "I'd like to imitate your style, so I'm going to do a whole sequence handheld." And I said, "Look, you'd better go back and look at the film again," because *The Killing Fields* is not a naturalistic film, in that sense. If you actually go through it, you'll find that it's very, very carefully orchestrated. The general feel is to capture the essence of naturalism, catch the essence of the documentary, so that you feel you're actually there. But everything is done on tracks. Everything is very, very specific camera moves, and the movement, the way one movement flows into another, we spent a lot of time thinking out.

He must have thought you were using Steadicams or something like that.

That's right. I said the Steadicam and all that is absolutely not used. The problem with the Steadicam is that it's not specific enough.

It seems as though some people just pick it up and run around and aim it all over the place.

That's its terrible danger. The problem about the Steadicam is you can use it easily and since it's got very few restrictions (except it's not too good at stopping abruptly), it encourages people to be undisciplined. Whereas if you lay a track and you put a dolly on the track and a crane on top of that, the restrictions are enormous. And those limitations are the sort of things that say, "How am I going to tell this story? How will I make this work? How will I use this image, and how will I get it to build,

too? How will I get each shot to have its own development, so that it's ready to leap into the next shot?''

Does the similarity in the subject matters of these two films mean that it was something you were waiting for the chance to express and needed film rather than television to do it?

Yes. I'd been to Thailand long before I was hired for *The Killing Fields,* and Burma, because I was interested in getting out of the confines of a purely European, Judeo-Christian, Greco-Latin civilization, just to see how I would be in a totally different environment and to see how it would open my eyes. I began to realize just how secure we were, irrationally, in the rightness of the way we viewed things. I've just been finishing reading a book written by the ex-Minister of Education in the Viet Cong government, which is the Viet Cong's view of the Paris Peace Accord negotiations. And they're absolutely riveting, the conclusions that are drawn, because it's blatantly clear that Kissinger had absolutely no idea of what was happening internally in Vietnam during the Peace Accords and why the North Vietnamese were stalling in the way that they stalled. He had no idea what was going on internally between the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. And that's unfortunate, because the shift in power between the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong that occurred during the Paris Peace Accords was absolutely crucial to the war in Vietnam and what Vietnam would be like when the war was finished.

William Shawcross's book Sideshow *argues that the American bombing, and also keeping it secret from the American people, laid Cambodia wide open for the horrors of Pol Pot.*

One of the central arguments of *The Killing Fields* was precisely that. It was about not understanding, and it was about the rigidity of not understanding, and we learn about this through the relationship of Sydney and Pran. Up to the turning point in the film, Sydney consistently underestimates that Pran is a man in terms of his potential. He saw Pran as a servant in much the same way as this country—Right and Left, actually—perceived Vietnam and those colonies as essentially at our service.

It almost became a Gunga Din kind of relationship. Or do you think that's overstating it?

I think that's overstating it a bit, but there were elements of that, absolutely, and Sydney would be the first to admit that. I think that Sydney felt being a reporter for *The New York Times* to report to the great American public was the most important thing. And he learned that it wasn't, that his relationship with Pran was as important, if not more.

Pauline Kael wrote that the film portrays Schanberg as self-righteous and overbearing. And that you, the writer [Bruce Robinson], and the producer [David Puttnam] could not possibly have failed to know that the audience would think so, too. Do you think that's accurate?

I think that the film was brave enough to criticize Schanberg, and that's absolutely right. There was a side of Sydney that was overbearing in exactly the same way that there was a side of the left in America that thought it had got it right. It is overweening of Noam Chomsky to have dared to say that we cannot believe the stories of refugees that came out of Cambodia because they have an interest in maintaining the status quo. That is an overweening, overbearing, and arrogant statement.

There is a leftist tendency to make saints out of its side. They're now doing it with the Sandinistas; they used to do it with the Viet Cong. Which doesn't mean that those people may not be right or partially right. It's just that they sentimentalize them.

I think that's right. I think it's a great danger of the left.

And they leave themselves wide open to getting kicked in the teeth, to the effect of ''You're to blame for Pol Pot'' or whatever.

Also, what they do is try to hide this as well. They try to pretend that it didn't happen. It's the danger of short-cut solutions, short-cut visions that don't take into account the reality of the world as it is experienced by other people. The problem with consciousness-raising is not that there's anything wrong with raising people's consciousness. It's if the expectation is that you raise other people's consciousness to be a replica of Western liberal consciousness, then what you're actually doing is distorting them. Their consciousness will be raised with their own cultural background, and it will express itself differently.

I've heard that you've talked to Corazon Aquino about filming her life and revolution.

Yes. Puttnam and I visited the Philippines recently for that very reason. What fascinated me is that when we were discussing *The Mission* a

long time ago, we talked about the Philippines as one of our examples of the role that the Church could play. And we began to talk about the idea of sacrifice and what that meant and how you might sacrifice yourself, and what business had you sacrificing yourself or sacrificing others, and did you need to do it at all? Just tossing those things up in the air. We were discussing the Philippines at that point. It wasn't that far after that Aquino got in his airplane. He said, very movingly, "If I am shot as I come off the plane, which is probably the most likely, I'm going to try and fall with my arms spread out, so that when they draw around my body on the ground, they'll draw the shape of a man loving his country." That's so heroic, that's wonderfully heroic. It's in *The Mission,* too. That's why I feel that the film in its own way is optimistic.

It's a tempered optimism.

Sure. That I think there has to be, because tempered optimism gives you the chance to respond realistically to the world and not think that whatever goes on, we'll come through it.

Reviews

SOMETHING WILD

Director: Jonathan Demme. Script: E. Max Frye. Producers: Demme and Kenneth Utt. Photography: Tak Fujimoto. Music: John Cale, Laurie Anderson. Orion.

Jonathan Demme's career in the eighties represents the interesting case of an American director experimenting with film-making at once trendy and radical. After his low-budget films of the seventies (*Caged Heat,* 1974; *Crazy Mama,* 1975; *Fighting Mad,* 1976; *Citizen Band,* retitled *Handle With Care,* 1977; and *The Last Embrace,* 1978), he achieved sudden recognition with *Melvin and Howard* (1980), where he blended his sympathies for Middle America with a subtle critique of its values. While the simple people who live by the system's promise of upward mobility are never looked down upon in the film, their ideology is exposed as a purveyor of prostitution and delusion. Even when the much fabled chance encounter with an outrageous fortune takes place, the promised land does not materialize. As the film informs us in the end, Melvin Dummar does not get his money, and the legal apparatus, doubting his very own experience, forces him to live in a void that makes everything senseless. However sympathetic the portrayal of its dreamers, the American Dream is shown as not making sense.

In 1982 Demme directed the poetic TV film *Who Am I To Be?*, where lack of sense and legitimation formed the basis for Harry's ever-changing identifications with the roles he played as a community theater actor. In *Swing Shift* (1984), a tale of life after Pearl Harbor, Demme's oft-cited humanism showed its flaws, for, in the warmth of its embrace, it refused to make clear-cut judgments on the characters, even when they were enthusiastically subscribing to the patriotic mood which was being resurrected by dominant ideology before Reagan's re-election.[1] In spite of the film's political inadequacy, however, it was clear that the director's main concern lay in the depiction of the void of sense created by the war, by a situation laying bare the cultural relativity of identities traditionally deemed as "natural" (women go work in plane factories and are subsequently sent back home to "their places"). The best shot in *Swing Shift* portrayed Lucky (Kurt Russell) in the back of a van filled with black musicians and drifting through the night and fog in America. Since Lucky's features and haircut resemble Demme's, this shot was, so to speak, autobiographical and prophetic.

For next came *Stop Making Sense* (1984), where Demme, with "a technique free of auteurist assertions," brought to the screen the Talking Heads' "studied yet heartfelt, intellectually challenging yet eminently danceable music."[2] "Stop making sense," sing the Talking Heads —which is to say, let us stop responding to the intellectual tradition demanding that we are and say something consistently meaningful. To visually underscore the Talking Heads' operation. Demme's camera devoted a lot of attention to the black back-up singers Edna Holt and Lynn

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Mabry who danced to the music but made, so to speak, no sense. Unlike the average, sexually hyper-connoted female back-ups, Holt and Mabry never once synchronized their motions into a harmonious whole. Instead, their asymmetric movements revealed a rupture of the ordered space in which sense is conventionally constructed: no specular coordination, no unified direction, but a mixture of repertory moves and disruptive twists.

Drenched in rock/reggae music and studded with black bit players from beginning to end (literally), *Something Wild* ideally connects with Demme's previous film also in that it starts re-making sense. In fact, *Something Wild* manages to be so clear about its undertakings that it is almost a didactic film aimed at that large sector of urban population uneasily straddling the drop-out ideal of the sixties and the join-the-rat-race spirit of the eighties. As J. Hoberman argued, *Something Wild* is a "comedy of yuppie angst," a sub-genre that includes *Desperately Seeking Susan, Lost in America, Into the Night,* and *After Hours* and that "has become one way for movies to resurrect the sixties."[3] Demme's new picture, I would add, is by far the most politically effective of the group, for both its content and form exemplify an attitude which does not give in to hopeless nostalgia but attempts to offer a prescription for all those hearts and minds caught in a similar dilemma.

Something Wild narrates how Charlie Driggs, the neo-vice-president of a Wall Street corporation, reshapes his own values and lifestyle in accordance with the rebellious spirit he has curbed to fulfill the demands of a competitive work ethic—a spirit that has only peeped through with occasional minor offenses, such as beating his restaurant checks. It is Lulu/Audrey who wakes him up. She first detects his "closet rebel" nature and then forces him into an impetuous affair which seems to have the opposite effect on her, for she moves away from her excessive wildness. The film entails therefore a double trajectory: Charlie stops deceiving himself about "channeling his rebellion into the mainstream" and chooses a more precarious and antagonistic existence; obversely, Audrey abandons the position of the outsider, which the film shows as untenable in the long run, and opts for a stable relationship with the new Charlie. This double trajectory hinges around the third major character, Ray Sinclair, ex-convict and Audrey's ex-husband. Iconographically astride macho underclass and angry punk, Ray pops up in the middle of the story, forcing a change of mood upon the film and its spectators. He violently reclaims Audrey, brutalizes Charlie and brings about a halo of doom which is all the more effective since the film refuses to make him into the bad guy to hate. Ray represents not only the extreme wildness Audrey must stay away from but also the injection of extremism needed by Charlie.

Audrey's final conversion is not without problems, as spectators inclined to feminism will readily notice. Flaunting a polka-dot blue dress and a wide-brim white hat—the image of a Blake Edwards lady—she catches up with Charlie in the same way as she did at the beginning; this time, however, she has a station wagon and lets *him* drive.[4] The more one enjoyed the initial inversion of roles and her blend of hippie wildness and punk aggressiveness (signified respectively by her colorful jewelry and her black clothes), the more one is going to regret this ending. Since she moves, in the course of the film, from being on top of things (and of Charlie) to a more demure position, and since both scriptwriter (Max Frye) and director are males, a question becomes legitimate: are we confronted with yet another male fantasy? And furthermore, who needs another "they-lived-happily-ever-after" ending where the sexual politics of traditional romance seem reconfirmed and therefore naturalized? The ambiguity of the film here may still be partially ascribed to humanism's flaws, to its soft stand towards institutions which are redeemed by the simple fact that they satisfy "the people," to its tendency to glorify everybody and therefore unify the sociosexual space in the name of common "human being-ness." Nevertheless, it is possible to view the ending in other ways, and I will leave it up to the reader to decide the extent to which my suggestion is overdetermined by my position as a male viewer. The last scene ends with Sister Carol's performing her Caribbean-inflected version of *Wild Thing,* so that we are left with the image of her strong, black presence as a corrective. And, more important, the rest of the film is so clear about its political sense that one should perhaps look at the end as an ironic return to the beginning: at Audrey's clothes as yet another instance of role

SOMETHING WILD

playing, at the station wagon as yet another hot car. In other words, the ending can be seen as similar to *Blue Velvet*'s, where the triumph of the robin and the fireman's smile are mere icing on a cake that the entire film revealed to be full of worms.

Another problem, according to J. Hoberman, is that "once you have time to think through Audrey's character—she's a human hidden agenda—you find it doesn't really exist."[5] True, Audrey is something like a coat hanger on which all sorts of signs have been hung, and this can be all the more upsetting in view of her sex. Here too, however, I would like to propose a twofold counter-explanation. The fact that "she doesn't really exist" may very well be, as we shall see, a symptom of a post-"stop making sense" signification in which the idea of a full-fledged subject gives way to a schizo-bricolage. After all, the film celebrates the wildness of not being oneself all the time, since the very notion of *one* self is a commonsensical habit to be stopped. Moreover, one must recognize that amidst the dispersion of signs constituting Audrey/Lulu, an effort is being made to give her clear political connotations through the books she reads. The very first time we see her, she's reading *Frida,* the biography of Frida Kahlo, the Marxist Mexican painter who "dressed in flamboyant clothes" and "loved spectacle as a mask to preserve privacy and personal dignity," who "wanted to live off her paintings" but "did not compromise her art in any way to make her salable," who had "a fascination with sexual organs" and a "mischievous self-assurance" which often embarrassed the New York press.[6] And when eating with Ray their last meal together, Audrey has Winnie Mandela's book *Part Of My Soul Went With Him,* which is obviously significant on a political and romantic level simultaneously.

Charlie's character, on the contrary, presents no problems, for his situation is clear from the outset: he has a lot to learn, or, better, to unlearn; but he has all the potential for succeed-

ing. Although attached to the ideal of the suburban American dream, Charlie displays an uncanny flexibility which makes him adapt to new situations without being too ashamed of the first-timer's awkwardness. The dance sequence epitomizes what is good about Charlie, for before entering he asks Audrey: "Who am I supposed to be this time?", a sign that he is becoming looser about his identity; and later, on the dance floor, his ludicrous quick jerks exemplify his willingness to try without being castrated by petty-bourgeois self-consciousness. Charlie grows steadily, and after he has proven himself by stealing Audrey back from Ray, she asks him "What are you gonna do now that you've seen how the other half lives—the other half of you?" *Something Wild* thus reaches here the peak of its clarity, for Charlie will first kill Ray and then leave his job. He will, in other words, absorb the antagonistic side represented by Ray.

As mentioned earlier, Ray is not *the* bad guy. Undoubtedly, spectators are likely to be turned off by his ruthless display of violence, but anybody attentive to the connotations radiating from his character must acknowledge that *Something Wild* uses Ray to make some of its points. Significantly, we never once laugh at Ray, although we may laugh with him. Whenever he derides middle-class values we cannot help feeling that the film backs him up, as when he contemptuously throws away a plastic Gumby from the car he is stealing—a car whose two "baby on board" signs the camera had made sure we could not miss; or when he laughs at the proud tone with which the high-school reunion book described the career of an assistant manager in a shoe store. The place where Ray lives resembles a Dantesque circle, with an ominous coming and going and far distant cries, expressionistic shadows and fires glaring in the night. He is a good friend of the very reprobates (Hell's Angels and poor black kids) that the film romanticizes. Indeed Ray has a tragic stature: he is the negative hero in a world where negativity is shown to yield considerable insight. To be sure the perception of Ray's character will vary in accordance with the spectators' stands; personally, I think that, with him, Demme has found the right antidote to his ajudgmental humanism, someone who draws lines and therefore forces us to do the same. What Ray does not have, however, is Charlie's elasticity. It is therefore only logical that it will be Charlie who proceeds to incorporate Ray's "good" qualities and not vice versa; and he does so by killing him. It is in this very sequence that Demme abandons his "invisible" style and forces meaning on us by making a lot of sense through camera movements and montage.

Ray hurls himself against Charlie and gets stabbed. A rapid succession of three close-ups ensures that we do not feel too relieved at what may seem the bad guy's demise: first, the bloody knife on the floor announces the gravity of the moment; next, a frontal close-up of the astonished Charlie stresses the complexity of what is happening; last, a frontal close-up of Ray signals that his face is filled with surprised admiration, almost joy. We then cut to a shot from behind Charlie's back and no sooner do we hear Ray exclaiming in a laudatory tone: "Shit Charlie!" than the camera moves around the right side of Charlie's body until it concentrates on the profiles of both men facing one another from the opposite edges of the frame. After a few seconds—enough time to convey their complementary nature—the camera follows Ray as he staggers away, but it soon cuts to an extremely suggestive close-up of his boots on the soaking wet carpet, while a muffled, electronic pounding fills the sound track with forebodings of a beyond. Finally, we see Ray in front of the mirror where he gets ready to die, with an air of serene acceptance, a hint of *amor fati.* By virtue of its stylized authorial intervention and its aura of tragic relevance—and together with Liotta's superb acting—the entire sequence suggests that the film itself is experiencing its cathartic moment, its real end, when the two opposites embodied by Charlie and Ray have become one. This way of using a murder to imply incorporation reminds us that characters are not real people. They are textual knots, webs of signs whose trajectory in the text must stop whenever a higher synthesis is needed—something reminiscent of the Hegelian *Aufhebung,* where the synthesis simultaneously annuls and maintains the qualities of the preceding stages.[7] If Charlie represented the inside of the system and Ray the violent assertion of an outside, the new Charlie will be someone who will be inside and yet against.

"Inside but against" is in my view the position described in and prescribed by *Something Wild.* And a cornerstone of this antagonism

within the order is the individual's capacity to play different roles, her/his not being stuck in too rigid an identity. It is in this light that Audrey's inconsistency may stop bothering us, for it makes her *the* role model in the film, a film which, David Edelstein argues, "is about having enough faith in who you are to go out and be anything you want to be, until it's time to drop one mask and put on another."[8] No metamorphosis is too bad to be discarded *a priori,* each role is worth investigating. Nobody in this film is tagged with contempt, and if it is true that this is generally the case with Demme, *Something Wild* provides his human empathy with a political legitimacy. Put another way, since Ray's and Charlie's trajectories, together with Demme's felicitous *mise en scène,* inform us about the text's leanings, the film may allow that there is eomthing good in everyone, that each role may have a surprise in store. Audrey's mother, Peaches, for example, seems to be a mummified lady who plays the harpsichord and lives in her own tasteless world of antiques and curios—which in part she is—but she reveals an unsuspected acumen when she proves not to be taken in by Audrey's lies. The same holds true for the filming of the high school reunion, at which The Feelies perform *I'm a Believer* with a huge American flag behind and where a lot of people seem to have been having a jolly good time. Since the reunion's motto is "The Spirit Of '76," a clear indication that national pride and prejudices are being connoted in this event, Demme's film seems to suggest that, yes, you can participate, provided there is something wild behind the mask you are wearing.

From a formal standpoint, *Something Wild* is similarly animated by what I called the "inside but against" attitude. It is, in many respects, a genre picture, but it breaks the conventions of each of the genres to which it seems to belong. If it looks like a screwball comedy, one need only remember the sudden change of pace brought about by Ray's appearance to realize that it turns, before our very eyes, into what Pauline Kael calls "a scary slapstick thriller."[9] It is also a road movie, but there is not enough land being traveled, not enough geographically connoted adventure. And of course *Something Wild* is a romantic comedy restaging the theme of the repressed man enlightened by a wisecracking, sexy woman. But if the film exalts romance, the passion it portrays is not something that can fit into the back of a station wagon, in spite of the ending. Love is, here, a state forcing Charlie and Audrey to try out new identities, provoking irresponsibility and anger, subjecting people to the call of the wild. So much so that Katherine Dieckmann compares *Something Wild* with *Blue Velvet* and *Sid and Nancy* in that they all "deal with sex and the lure of intense aggression as inextricable phenomena that bounce off one another."[10] The fact is that Demme's new film does not belong to any one genre; it merely mimics the motions of some genres in order to better get across its iconoclastic sense. *Something Wild* uses generic props as a palatable background for its "inside but against" operation.

As far as film style is concerned, Demme's camera movements and montage are generally subservient to conventional narrative needs, although in a few instances he forcefully comes out with his subjective intentions. In addition to the already discussed murder sequence, the camera makes itself felt, for example, in Ray's violent robbery of the convenience store. Instead of following the characters, Demme shows Ray's struggle to push Charlie and Audrey into his car on a black-and-white TV screen, supposedly on the store's monitor circuit. Perhaps it is no accident that this second major stylistic intervention involves a TV set, for the entire film reveals the desire to incorporate the freewheeling velocity and fragmented signification of music videos. In effect, by weaving into the narrative excerpts from almost fifty songs (arranged by John Cale, who already collaborated with Demme, on *Who Am I To Be?,* and Laurie Anderson), *Something Wild* points towards a film-making in which rock/reggae music plays a major role. *Something Wild* thus pays a tribute to a scene which, in the last few years, has represented a popular example of antagonism-within-the-system; and if several songs celebrate love, they do so by stressing its wildness, which is in perfect keeping with the film's peculiar brand of romanticism.[11] The music is so pervasive that it forces us to rethink the relation image/sound and acknowledge the fact that here sound is indeed an integral part of the *mise en scène.*

It is within the freedom allowed by the *mise en scène* that a director operating "inside but against" mainstream narrative conventions can afford to intersperse fragments of political sig-

nification. And Demme is truly genial here. The screwball framework allows him to fill the screen with marginal figures radiating an antagonist halo, such as the countless black bit players who represent the measure of Charlie's progress. Significantly, Charlie's new course matches the most telling example of the film's oblique radicalism. While looking for Audrey at her old address, he finds a new tenant who asks him: "Do you know what her rent was? I have the feeling the landlord is screwing me." "Well, that would not surprise me," replies Charlie, walking away from the building on whose walls we read the graffiti "speculators out."[12] Occasionally, *Something Wild* even becomes Felliniesque in its oblique critique of the status quo via a *mise en scène* filled with obese people and chatting folks in a *kitsch* paradise.

To summarize: *Something Wild* joyously subscribes to a schizophrenic mixture of acceptance and refusal, or, better, refusal within acceptance. If the sixties wildness advocated some great master plan which in many ways mirrored the bourgeois tele-ideology it purported to attack, Demme's film proposes a post-modern wildness which is devoid of metaphysical legitimation but makes sense, however fragmentary and precarious: it is better to be a Downtown hipster than a Wall Street acolyte. And if, Ray's case teaches, there is no outside to the system and we are all Jonases in the voracious belly of a whale, it is still possible to be wild enough to make the whale's digestion difficult. At least, *Something Wild* suggests, you can have a lot of fun and cause the whale to have the hiccups.

—MAURIZIO VIANO

NOTES

1. The fact that Goldie Hawn in effect produced the film, for a big Hollywood studio (Warners), may have something to do with its political ambiguity. For a discussion of the film's flawed script and of Demme's reluctance to direct it, see Steve Vineberg's review in *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1984, pp. 31-4.
2. Thomas Doherty, *"Stop Making Sense," Film Quarterly,* Summer 1985, p. 14.
3. J. Hoberman, "The Call Of The Wild," *Village Voice,* November 11, 1986, p. 82.
4. More specifically, Audrey's trajectory brings to mind Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) in Blake Edwards's *Breakfast at Tiffany's.* In addition to similar scenes, the intertextual parallel is justified by the fact that Holly thinks of herself as a "wild thing."
5. J. Hoberman, op. cit.
6. Hayden Herrera, *Frida,* respectively pp. 289; 162-3. On page 163 we read: "She loved department stores, shops in Chinatown, and dime stores. 'Frida went through dime stores like a tornado,' Lucienne recalls. "Suddenly she would stop and buy something immediately. She had an extraordinary eye for the genuine and the beautiful. She'd find cheap costume jewelry and she'd make it look fantastic.'" Beside defining Lulu/Audrey, this aspect of Frida Kahlo qualifies also one of Demme's often praised virtues.
7. A director who has consistently used a character's death to signify the terminal stage of a textual trajectory is Pasolini. *Accattone, Mamma Roma, La Ricotta* and *Porcile* all end with a death. In *Hawks and Sparrows,* the two protagonists kill and devour a crow representing Marxist ideology, a scene which Pasolini has explained as signifying incorporation.
8. David Edelstein, "The Joys Of Genre," in *Village Voice,* December 2, 1986, p. 71.
9. *New Yorker,* November 17, 1986, p. 139.
10. Katherine Dieckmann, "She Shot Him Dead And Good," *Village Voice,* December 2, 1986, p. 97.
11. The opening song by David Byrne (who sings with Celia Cruz) is entitled "Loco De Amor": crazy from/for love. David Byrne's own film, *True Stories,* reminds us of *Something Wild* in that it devotes a lot of attention to common people and portrays them with subtle irony.
12. When I saw *Something Wild* in New York, most people laughed and clapped at Charlie's reply, thus activating the film's political irony at its fullest. In Eugene, Oregon, where the problem of housing is considerably milder, Charlie's comment went practically unnoticed. This is not to say that there is a proper reading and New Yorkers got it right; this anecdote testifies to the relevance of a sociology of the audience if we are to fabricate a reception theory for the cinema.

AMERICAN DREAMS

A film by James Benning. Filmmakers Cooperative, 175 Lexington Avenue, New York NY 10016.

After the completion of *11 X 14* in 1976, James Benning was heralded as a major new talent, and as the best evidence that the American Midwest was making a contribution to independent film-making. Here was a narrative film that was sensuous and beautiful to look at, sophisticated and witty in its use of self-reflexive composition and timing, and strongly reminiscent of some of the memorable dimensions of American realist painting and photography. Further, it experimented inventively with narrative. We see two of the main characters together in the first shot; but once they separate, they're not seen together again, and in fact, they seem to be different people each time we do see them. A third main character is never seen with the other two. *11 X 14* creates much of the ambiance of more typical narrative films, while radically departing from the convention that all strands of a narrative will finally interweave and make sense in some particular way.[1] All in all, Benning seemed a film-maker who might bridge the gap

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between independent film artists and Hollywood movie-makers. *11 X 14* was reviewed widely, and Benning's next feature was eagerly awaited.

When *One Way Boogie Woogie* (1977) appeared, many of us who had hoped for a film which would extend Benning's narrative experiments were disappointed. (Looking back now, I think I had hoped for a film similar to *Stranger Than Paradise;* like Jim Jarmusch's recent film, *11 X 14* had experimented with long takes and a stationary camera.) *One Way Boogie Woogie* presents sixty discrete single-shot one-minute units, held together by Benning's formal concerns with composition and off-screen space and by his sense of place. Narrative isn't a factor, except in a minimal way within some of the individual units. *One Way Boogie Woogie* made clear that Benning's interest in the more "arty" dimensions of *11 X 14* was at least as strong, and probably stronger, than his concern with narrativity. The title, in fact, was an allusion to Piet Mondrian's paintings, "Victory Boogie Woogie" and "Broadway Boogie Woogie." Since narrativity was fast becoming the primary focus of a substantial segment of independent film-making, and of academic writing about film, the move from *11 X 14* to *One Way Boogie Woogie* seemed retrogressive—or at least not progressive—even though the second feature was, on its own terms, of considerable interest.

Benning's third feature, *Grand Opera* (1978), combines an extended meditation on the history of the mathematical concept of pi and a variety of formalist autobiographical set pieces (at one point Benning provides a 360° pan of every place he ever lived) with allusions to other American independent film-makers: Hollis Frampton, George Landow (Owen Land), Yvonne Rainer, Michael Snow, and Stan Brakhage (whose comment, "I'm not against sound films, though I rather think of it as grand opera," provides the title). *Grand Opera* can be understood as a requiem for what P. Adams Sitney called "structural" film-making: as if to signal the end of that movement, the film concludes with an image of a building—a structure—being demolished.[2] For many viewers, *Grand Opera,* like *One Way Boogie Woogie,* lacked the energy of *11 X 14* and earlier films, and worse, it seemed full of pointless, self-indulgent in-jokes. Though some established institutions remained supportive (*October* ran a complete image by image, text by text documentation of *Grand Opera* in its Spring 1980 issue), the talk was that Benning's work was failing to fulfill its early promise, and this talk continued, though with less fervent interest, when *Him and Me* appeared in 1982,[3] and when Benning's fifth long film, *American Dreams,* was completed in 1984.

While I understand the reaction to Benning's career, I find the generally lukewarm (and sometimes hostile) response to *American Dreams* not only unwarranted, but ironic.[4] As far as I'm concerned, it's Benning's best film since *11 X 14,* and implicitly a very interesting filmic analysis of the psychological/social sources of structural film-making. And to top things off, it's reasonably accessible to audiences. *American Dreams* is Benning's fullest elaboration of his interest in the uses of printed text in film, an interest clearly evident in *8½ X 11, 11 X 14,* and *Grand Opera,* and in the work of a number of the film-makers *Grand Opera* claims an allegiance to: Hollis Frampton (*Surface Tension, Poetic Justice, Zorns Lemma*), for example, and Yvonne Rainer (*Film About a Woman Who . . .*). Through 57 of the film's 58 minutes, the viewer is presented with two distinct kinds of text, and often three, simultaneously.

As the film begins, a handwritten text is moving continually from right to left through the bottom sector of the frame. This text moves slowly enough to be clearly understood, but quickly enough so that in order to pay attention to another part of the frame, one must either rush through a segment of this text or miss some portion of it. The second kind of textual material is a function of the film's painstaking, item-by-item, front-and-rear presentation of Benning's extensive collection of Hank Aaron memorabilia: baseball cards, buttons, soft drink container tops, and the like. Nearly all these items, and the baseball cards most obviously, provide textual information to supplement the usual photographic (or other) reproduction of Aaron. In fact, for anyone interested in baseball, Aaron's statistics are so remarkable that they're fascinating to follow year by year. The third kind of text used in *American Dreams* is superimposed information. As the sound track alternates between brief excerpts from notable speeches which occurred during the years Benning was growing

up and brief passages from popular songs of the era, superimposed texts regularly identify the speech-maker, the occasion and the date, and the names of the songs and singers. Other superimposed numbers regularly provide us with the grand total of home runs Aaron had hit by the end of each year; and periodically, "variation," "proof," and other terms flash on and off to indicate some unusual dimension of an item of the Aaron memorabilia.

Because *American Dreams* provides multiple sources of information at once, viewers must continually determine the nature of their own relationships with the film. Judging from my conversations with people after screenings, I'd guess that the central issue, particularly for first-time viewers, is how completely they feel they must read the handwritten text at the bottom of the frame. Since this text is clearly developing an interesting narrative, careful attention to it is difficult to resist. In fact, one viewer of my acquaintance became so absorbed in following the incessant right to left movement that when she stood up at the end of the film, she lost her balance. Most first-time viewers seem to regard the bottom text as primary; they read as much of it as possible, and regularly scan the rest of the frame to maintain a sense of what's happening on other levels of the film. At times, however, audience response seems focused on the handwritten text almost exclusively. This is most evident during several passages early in the film dealing with the narrator's sexual experiences. In one case, the viewer is a voyeur of both what the narrator describes and of the narrator's own voyeurism: "Jamaica, New York City I didn't sleep. A beautiful naked lady across a parking lot in the next motel out by her window (floor to ceiling) smoking cigarettes and I had to watch her. Her table room light was on & a thin vail of curtain allowed me to watch as she passionately kissed a man who wore cloths. . . ." The fact that we're reading this in handwriting and the writer's failure to correct his spelling add to the feeling of voyeuristic intimacy generated in many viewers by the content of what we assume is a diary (a diary written—as we learn later—on the assumption that it will be discovered: "This will be one of the most closely read pages since the SCROLLS in those caves"). The inclusion of these sexual passages early in the film titillates viewers (this viewer, at least) enough so that the bottom text continues to lure them through the remainder of the film.

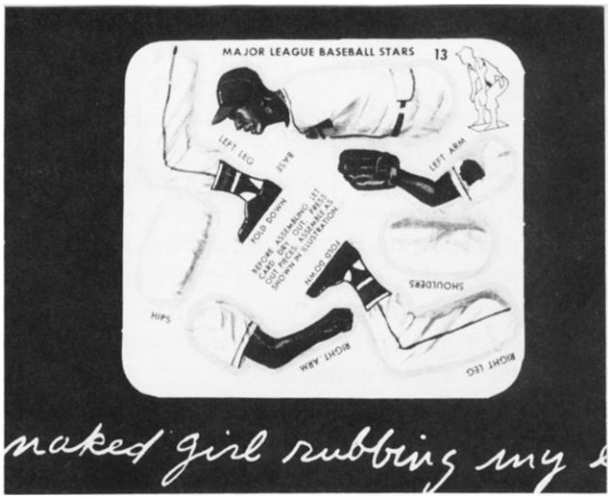
No specific information about the diary-writer is included until the conclusion of *American Dreams,* and while some people may recognize the diary immediately, most viewers I've seen the film with do not. In fact, much of the drama of this level of the film evaporates for those who do make the identification. For those who don't, one of the film's primary dramatic elements is the question of the diarist's identity: is he Benning himself or someone else? The diary is very frank, but many viewers probably expect more than normal frankness from an independent film-maker, especially one who would make a film as unconventional as *American Dreams.* Even when the diarist begins to talk about his guns and his fantasies about killing Nixon, one doesn't completely turn away from this view. Except for its frankness, the diary seems rather "normal"; millions of American men would probably be able to identify with it: what man hasn't fantasized about killing a head of state, hasn't peeped through a window hoping to see lovers? It's only as we realize that this "normal" American male seems increasingly obsessed with killing Nixon and seems to be positioning himself so as to really do it, that we understand there's more here than we expected. When the diarist finally changes his target and closes in on George Wallace, the Alabama governor who became a symbol of racism and segregation during the sixties, we realize that we've been reading the diary of Arthur Bremer, the man who shot Wallace in Laurel, Maryland—as one of the last oral quotations in the film reminds us—on May 15, 1972. Of course, once we realize we've been reading Bremer's diary, we can hardly fail to consider what has come to be "normal" for a male in American society. Benning's own confrontation of this troubling question, his recognition of his own complicity in Bremer's way of thinking, seems implicit in his decision to personally handwrite the diary.

That *American Dreams* is a film for multiple viewings is obvious the moment one discovers the diarist's identity. In isolation, Aaron's quest of Ruth's homerun record (combined with the remarkable breadth of his skills as a player) seems natural and heroic—particularly since Aaron's major-league career came to represent the absurdity of the segregation which had

gripped major league baseball for so long. Aaron's pursuit of 715 home runs came to seem symbolic of the black pursuit of full recognition by the majority society. This is evident all through *American Dreams* in Benning's references to landmark moments in the struggle of blacks—including, obviously, his use of the diary of *Wallace's* assailant. As wonderful as Aaron's accomplishments were, however, their meaning is altered by the Bremer text. Benning's juxtaposition of the two careers brings out their parallels, and while we recognize that Aaron's dream may be positive and Bremer's negative—that they represent the polar opposites of American dreaming—nevertheless, Aaron's compulsive need to beat Ruth (Aaron was a shoe-in for the Hall of Fame even without this) comes to seem nearly as problematic as Bremer's dogged quest for fame and significance. Both men seem involved in the same set of American assumptions about how men demonstrate their worth.

The complex implications of the Aaron/Bremer juxtaposition are dramatized by Benning's contextualizing them within the network of suggestiveness developed by his choices and juxtapositions of the excerpts from songs and speeches, all of which function as instances of successful and/or failed American dreams, and continually remind us of the frequency with which one American's dream turns out to be another's nightmare. The Aaron/Bremer parallel is further confirmed and extended by Benning's implicit recognition of his own double-edged involvement in the same pattern.

On one hand, the film reveals Benning as a thoroughly compulsive collector and exhibitor of Aaron memorabilia: both sides of every item are presented, even if nothing at all is on one side, and emphatic flashing texts identify minor quirks in particular items. Secondly, Benning's choice of a continuous, relentlessly regular minimal structure for *American Dreams* not only reflects his own personal commitment (compulsiveness?) as a film artist, it suggests a way of thinking about the development of the male-dominated structural cinema which occurred during the years of Aaron's and Bremer's final achievements, a cinema Benning has struggled to be a significant part of. The structural approach has produced many stunning films, but these days one cannot help but wonder whether the single-minded formal con-



AMERICAN DREAMS

trol so characteristic of these films reenacts—in a most sophisticated way—the same American macho patterns evident in the lives of Aaron and Bremer. Of course, just as Aaron's surpassing Ruth's record may well have strengthened the position of blacks in American life, the accomplishments of formal film opened new territory for feminist film-makers concerned with confronting Western consumer culture's imaging of women and men, territory explored in such diverse films as Rainer's *Film About a Woman Who . . .* , Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman . . .* , Anthony McCall/Andrew Tyndall's *Argument* and Diana Barrie's *My Version of the Fall.* But whatever we finally decide about the impact and value of structural film-making, I'd rate *American Dreams* a considerable achievement *and* one of our most revealing comments on the nature of this kind of achievement.

Since 1984, Benning has made a computer installation piece, *Pascal's Lemma* (1985), and two films: *O Panama* (1985, 28 minutes, co-made with Burt Barr, whose short story was the basis for the collaborative film) and *Landscape Suicide* (1986, 95 minutes). The most interesting of the three is *Landscape Suicide,* a formal reflection on the relationship of the violent acts of two well-known murderers and the physical/social environments in which these acts took place. The murderers are Ed Gein, the rural Wisconsin grave-robber and apparently psychopathic killer of at least two women, who was the prototype for Norman Bates in *Psycho* and for the mad butchers of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre;* and Bernadette Protti, whose murder of a junior high school classmate

stunned a posh suburb of San Francisco. The film is presented not as an accusation against the two locales, but as a meditation on the two murderers, on the similarities which underlie their obvious differences, and on the degree to which the particulars of their shocking acts seem somehow fitting as extreme manifestations of the particular environments in which these crimes occurred.

While I find *Landscape Suicide* somewhat less gripping and suggestive than *American Dreams,* it is an impressive film. Particularly memorable is the experience of seeing these tragic locations in Benning's formally elegant, slightly surreal compositions, and Rhonda Bell's characterization of Protti. Also, the film is reasonably accessible for a long formal work. I had the experience of showing *Landscape Suicide* to a large group of Criminal Justice majors at Utica College—people with no interest in experimental film; a number of them were fascinated.

Benning's exploration of composition and off-screen space and his interest in experimenting with narrativity continue, but more and more, his recent films use the procedures typical of his earlier work to consider less film-reflexive, more humanly compelling (or at least more sensational) subjects.

—SCOTT MacDONALD

NOTES

1. *8½ X 11,* an earlier Benning film (1974), developed a similar narrative experiment. Here, two narrative strands—one involving two women travelling, the other centering on a hitchhiking farm laborer—develop without intersecting until the film's final shot, when the women's car is seen passing over a bridge under which the farm worker bathes in a stream. The characters never meet, but at one moment they are in the same space at the same time—a device reminiscent of John Dos Passos's novels. Sections of *8½ X 11* were used in *11 X 14.*

2. See P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), Chapter 12: "Structural Film."

3. *Him and Me* is a good deal like *Grand Opera,* especially in its use of material from Benning's personal life, deflected in various narrative and formal ways. The central event of the film is the death of a man—but we don't realize this until the conclusion of the film, at which point we must reinterpret all the events we've seen previously. The man who is found dead in the female protagonist's bed is based on—is perhaps an exorcism of—Benning's waking up in bed with a woman who had died during the night.

4. For a hostile review, see J. Hoberman's comments in the March 14, 1984 *Village Voice;* the Summer, 1984 issue of *Afterimage* includes Marita Sturken's lukewarm review.

CONTRIBUTORS

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STAMMHEIM

Director: Reinhard Hauff. Script: Stefan Aust. Photography: Frank Bruhne and Gunther Wulff. Editing: Heidi Handorf. Produced by Eberhard Junkersdorf and Jurgen Flimm for Bioskop, Munich, and the Thalia-Theater, Hamburg.

In this re-creation of the draining, two-year confrontation between the leaders of the Baader-Meinhof group and the West German judiciary, Reinhard Hauff has fashioned a powerful study of the individual, the law, and the modern state. *Stammheim,* named after the top-security prison located in a suburb outside Stuttgart in which the famed trial took place, demonstrates in almost textbook fashion the vast brutality of the state and, perhaps more importantly, its complete inability to permit alternative viewpoints to flourish. The entire superstructure of capitalist society—business interests, the professions, the media, the judiciary—are shown to be complicitous in the tenacious defense of that society against all real or potential assailants.

The film begins with explanatory, nonjudgmental titles which attempt to establish a tone of objectivity. Right from the beginning the viewer knows that *Stammheim* will be neither leftist hagiography nor rightist apologetics. Appropriately, the initial focus is on the real actors in this drama—the real Baader, Meinhof, and the others—in the form of a short documentary video tape of their capture. This is followed by a brief reading, in a flat, newsreel kind of voice, of their various biographical sketches, accompanied by mug shots of the real participants. It is only then, after the "real" has somehow been stated and established, that Hauff rolls the credits for the film, and in so doing, provides

stunned a posh suburb of San Francisco. The film is presented not as an accusation against the two locales, but as a meditation on the two murderers, on the similarities which underlie their obvious differences, and on the degree to which the particulars of their shocking acts seem somehow fitting as extreme manifestations of the particular environments in which these crimes occurred.

While I find *Landscape Suicide* somewhat less gripping and suggestive than *American Dreams,* it is an impressive film. Particularly memorable is the experience of seeing these tragic locations in Benning's formally elegant, slightly surreal compositions, and Rhonda Bell's characterization of Protti. Also, the film is reasonably accessible for a long formal work. I had the experience of showing *Landscape Suicide* to a large group of Criminal Justice majors at Utica College—people with no interest in experimental film; a number of them were fascinated.

Benning's exploration of composition and off-screen space and his interest in experimenting with narrativity continue, but more and more, his recent films use the procedures typical of his earlier work to consider less film-reflexive, more humanly compelling (or at least more sensational) subjects.

—SCOTT MacDONALD

NOTES

1. *8½ X 11,* an earlier Benning film (1974), developed a similar narrative experiment. Here, two narrative strands—one involving two women travelling, the other centering on a hitchhiking farm laborer—develop without intersecting until the film's final shot, when the women's car is seen passing over a bridge under which the farm worker bathes in a stream. The characters never meet, but at one moment they are in the same space at the same time—a device reminiscent of John Dos Passos's novels. Sections of *8½ X 11* were used in *11 X 14.*

2. See P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), Chapter 12: "Structural Film."

3. *Him and Me* is a good deal like *Grand Opera,* especially in its use of material from Benning's personal life, deflected in various narrative and formal ways. The central event of the film is the death of a man—but we don't realize this until the conclusion of the film, at which point we must reinterpret all the events we've seen previously. The man who is found dead in the female protagonist's bed is based on—is perhaps an exorcism of—Benning's waking up in bed with a woman who had died during the night.

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a clear and efficient equation concerning the proper relationship of the fiction film to the real documentary events that it intends to portray.

Somewhat surprisingly, the film is quite straightforward in its technique. At first it almost resembles a television docudrama in effect and in paucity of means; the lighting is flat, the camera work is uninspired, and the editing is strictly functional. One quickly comes to understand, however, that Hauff's sober technique plays a crucial role as ballast for the histrionics of the proceedings. Nevertheless, the film is not completely shorn of technique, and Hauff establishes a subtle but powerful motif when he insistently intercuts a brooding extreme long shot of the exterior of the fortress-like jail between heavy dramatic trial scenes. We get thus a visual, very visceral sense of the power and heaviness of the state.

Conflicts among the members of the group, which were played up in contemporary media accounts, are shown but not dwelled upon in the film. Throughout, Hauff wisely chooses to avoid the kind of personal psychologizing that Hollywood usually relies on, and gives us instead a chilling picture of the absolute insistence of the state on doing things its way, no matter what the cost to its own institutions and laws, let alone its individual citizens. The state systematically rejects as frivolous all complaints offered by the defendants, seeming to know that it is in complete power, but nervous at the same time that a single misstep may bring the entire structure down. Again and again, the state is shown in all its officious brutality, absolutely determined to get its way. In fact, the Baader-Meinhof group's strategy was to show, at their own risk, the actual totalitarian nature of present-day Germany, and they succeeded beyond their fondest hopes. What results is in fact almost a caricature, hardly to be believed; then one remembers that virtually everything in the film was taken directly from the official transcripts.

Despite the national specificity of the film's accusations, it is clear that all the Western democracies are indicted by implication. For an American viewer, especially, the Stammheim trial is uncannily reminiscent of various political trials, such as the trial of the Chicago Seven, which took place in the United States in the late sixties and early seventies. Thus, the Stammheim defendants try to raise the issue of United States war crimes in Vietnam but, just as in the American trials, the German judges disallow it as "irrelevant" to the criminal charges supposedly at issue. Consistent with their political position the defendants admit their attacks on the US Army bases in Germany, but they refuse to accept responsibility for the bomb attacks on the offices of Axel Springer, a notorious right-wing media mogul. The defense, again as in the US trials, tries over and over to make it a political trial; the prosecution and the judges, of course, are just as adamant about keeping it a criminal trial, and though the chief judge at one point does admit that the trial has its political "aspects," the state prevails. In perhaps the most bizarre twist of the courtroom drama, the chief judge later is forced to resign when it is revealed that he has been leaking documents to the press. Significantly, however, his resignation becomes inevitable only when the chief prosecutor withdraws his support from the judge, revealing the improper pressure the judge had put on him in a desperate late night phone call. Though there seems to be some shred of professionalism left in the German legal system, it is clear that the judge would never have had to resign if his behavior had only been challenged by the defense.

Hauff nicely negotiates the unequal and sometimes contradictory demands of keeping the viewer's interest by telling a dramatic story, on the one hand, and, on the other, developing certain important philosophical and political critiques of the state's power—for example, the method of incarceration, the use of torture and solitary confinement, and so on, and their effects on the minds of the prisoners. Invariably, the film is shrill and the defendants are hardly pleasant, at least by conventional standards, but one senses again that Hauff is trying to approximate their actual effect at the trial rather than to make them more appealing as leftist martyrs. In any case, it is clear he has done us all a service by resolutely concentrating on the issues raised by the Stammheim trial rather than painting a reductive picture of good guys and bad guys. At the end of the film, a final intertitle informs us that the defendants have all committed "suicide," and though Hauff lets it go at that, without editorializing, the viewer is free to entertain the very strong suspicion that it was not like this at all.

—PETER BRUNETTE

The Annual Book Roundup

We present below a comprehensive survey of English-language film books published during roughly the past year. (Paul Michaud's regular notes on French film books are also included.) As readers will see, the quantity of titles published remains high, and while we have attempted to keep reviews shorter this year in hopes of covering everything in a single issue, the quality of many books remains impressive too. A few titles have surely escaped our net; in addition, a number of important books are still out for review, and will be dealt with in succeeding issues. As before, we have grouped titles in two alphabetical-by-author series within each category: the series for longer reviews, and that for briefer listings. Annotations signed "E.C." are by Ernest Callenbach, "J. F." by John Fell.

Unfortunately, some bookstores have become reluctant to place orders for single copies of books. Would-be customers lacking access to a full-service bookstore can, however, learn to place their own orders by phone or mail. For some new or obscure publishers we have included a mailing address in our listings. In the case of established publishers we give, according to the usual bibliographical custom, merely city and publisher name. (We include price when it has been supplied to us by publishers.) Buyers can ask the 800 information service (dial 800 - 555-1212) if the company in question has a tollfree 800 number, over which orders can be placed. If not, a mailing address can be obtained by phoning a reference librarian or checking reference works such as *Books in Print* or *The Literary Marketplace,* which are available in virtually all libraries. (We urge readers whose libraries have not yet subscribed to *Film Quarterly* to call their periodicals librarian's attention to the journal and its indispensable book coverage!)

Because the Editor of *Film Quarterly* is also responsible for University of California Press film books, we give below only brief summaries for UCP titles. (They can be ordered by dialing 800 - UC PRESS.)

Autobiographies and Biographies

Alpert, Hollis. *Fellini: A Life.* New York: Atheneum, 1986. $21.95. It is well established (by, among others, Giuletta Masina) that Fellini lies about his life: his irrepressible imagination has created, over the years, many fanciful tales. Although Alpert doesn't document anything, he claims to have worked carefully to sort out something like a true story, and he stitches it together skillfully, using many quotes from interviews to produce an almost dialogue-like effect. If there is a secret interior to Fellini, however, it is not revealed here. —E.C.

Bego, Mark. *Rock Hudson: Public and Private.* New York: New American Library, 1986. $2.95 paper.

Buckley, Gail Lumet. *The Hornes: An American Family.* New York: Knopf, 1986. $18.95. The daughter of Lena Horne has traced her family history back six generations. It encompasses a slave (who bought her freedom from earnings as a street corner vendor of persimmon beer), a white riverboat captain, a Creek or Cherokee Indian, and a Louisiana Creole. Late in the nineteenth century, the Horns gave up on the South and moved to Brooklyn, where they added an *e* and joined the black bourgeoisie. Most of the text follows the fortunes of this upper-middle-class branch, concentrating on Gail Buckley's mother. A reader familiar with Lena Horne's story will find some additional material about her pressured early life and little new in Hollywood except for backstage gossip about *Stormy Weather* and *Cabin in the Sky.* The actress's skirmishes with HUAC are detailed with a candor that characterizes the entire book. (She cleared herself in *Counterattack* by way of George Sokolsky.) In truth, a pervasive subtext is the Hornes' generation-to-generation experiences with American bigotry. Paul Robeson, Walter White and W. E. B. Du Bois reappear regularly as friends and advisors. With the sixties' political triumphs and assassinations, black gentility fades. Lena Horne's Broadway success and her 1984 Kennedy Center award (where she embraced Lilian Gish of *The Birth of a Nation*) represent a different decade's achievement, as does this excellent biography. —J. F.

Carroll, Diahann with Ross Firestone. *Diahann: An Autobiography.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1986. $16.95 cloth.

Culhane, Shamus. *Talking Animals and Other People.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $24.95. Pluto's animator traces his 58-year career from errand boy to president of a studio, with the main focus on business atmosphere and personal relationships; but many observations also bear on the craft—now on the verge of total computerization. —E.C.

Freedland, Michael. *Shirley MacLaine.* Manchester, NH: Salem House, 1986. $17.95. Conventional biography, up to 1984.

Gordon, Ruth. *My Side: The Autobiography of Ruth Gordon.* New York: Donald I. Fine, 1986. $9.95 paper. Life as a whirlwind—inauspicious theater beginnings, later triumphs, leading up to the pinnacles of *Harold and Maude,* whose painful casting and delightful shooting she recounts in some detail, and *Rosemary's Baby,* which she discusses not at all. The breathless dialogue-scene style may exhaust some readers, but it was Ruth Gordon's element and she plays with it and in it to reckless and wonderful effect. —E.C.

Hudson, Rock, and Sara Davidson. *Rock Hudson: His Story.* New York: Morrow, 1986. $16.95. Sympathetic biography.

Hunter, Allan. *Faye Dunaway.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $16.95. Readable Hollywood biography.

Katz, Robert. *Love is Colder than Death: The Life and Times of Rainer Werner Fassbinder.* New York: Random House, 1987. $19.95. This lurid biography of Fassbinder by Robert Katz is an exploitation exercise of the worst sort. It regurgitates for profit all the sleazy stories we have ever heard (or imagined) about Fassbinder and his friends. To make the sordid narrative even more campy, the various bit players of Fassbinder's entourage are here tarted up with the female nicknames Fassbinder assigned to the various male members, with the consequence that we never really know (if we ever cared to know) who is doing what to whom. This bitchy book offers no film criticism and no appraisal of the man's artistry or ideas, just a farrago of camp decadence and drug-filled dissipation. It is not worth the paper it is printed on. —JAMES ROY MACBEAN

Kiersch, Mary. *Curtis Bernhardt.* Metuchen, NJ: Directors Guild of America and Scarecrow Press, 1986. $19.50. Oral history at a high level. Bernhardt's work began in the Berlin of the twenties—he worked with the likes of Béla Balázs and Marlene Dietrich—and ran through the *noir* period of Hollywood. (Later, Dietrich downplayed her films with him, and Sternberg refused to help him escape Nazi Germany.) Kiersch is well informed, and good conversation results. —E.C.

Levy, Alan. *Forever, Sophia: An Intimate Portrait.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $15.95. Bio with emphasis on private life with Ponti, child-rearing practices, and speculation on her romantic future.

Maychick, Diana, and L. Avon Borgo. *Heart to Heart with Robert Wagner.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $13.95.

Moseley, Roy, et al. *Rex Harrison: A Biography.* New York: St. Martin's, 1987. $17.95.

Rollyson, Jr., Carl E. *Marilyn Monroe: A Life of the Actress.* Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1986. $29.95. Emphasis on the psychiatric but also the professional sides.

Shipman, Nell. *The Silent Screen & My Talking Heart.* Boise, Idaho: Boise State University, 1987. $13.95 paper. This is not another *Westward with the Wind,* but it's a near cousin: an astonishing autobiographical account by a silent film writer, director, and star who abandoned Hollywood in 1922 in favor of a wilderness life in Priest Lake, Idaho, where she tried to build a studio, managed a large wild-animal menagerie, and became involved in bizarre local squabbles. Peter Morris, in a critical afterword, considers that Shipman's film work "can be considered both as radically modern in its own time, yet participating in an emerging [feminist and ecological] perspective in the twentieth century." She was also of that generation of women who were gradually marginalized from central (and numerous) roles in the industry—as scriptwriters, stars, editors. The failure of her studio, Morris argues, was a small, sad detail in the gradual consolidation of Hollywood industrial methods that left no room for artisanal production. Shipman was, through all this, an adventuress who could handle sled-dogs and bears, liked fooling around with cars, and was a precise and evocative writer; she lacks Beryl Markham's absolute stylistic pitch, but much of the book is a good read. Here she is, having gone out alone and fallen through lake ice: "The chunk of ice on which I rested my chin held firm. I took hold of it gingerly and pulled. There was no zoom, no crack, no sluffing off. I began to pull myself onto it, face, breast and waist, heard my belt buckle rasp on the edge, then my trembling knees, legs, ankles and, as my shoes cleared, a faint soggy sound as they drained. Now I was stretched out flat on the ice and began to inch forward, wormlike, until I dared to rise to my feet, scoop up the binoculars and, at last, begin to run. Squishing water, nearly frozen, I must run." She survives hypothermia, changes to dry woolens, and goes into the lodge kitchen to fix supper. Next day, the last of the studio's employees quit. Now how do we get to see *The Girl from God's Country* or *Grub Stake*? —E.C.

Swenson, Karen. *Barbra: The Second Decade.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1986. $19.95. Biography, with decent respect for the writer-producer-director-star of *Yentl.* —E.C.

Taraborrelli, J. Randy. *Cher.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $17.95 cloth.

Vickers, Hugo. *Cecil Beaton: A Biography.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1985. $25.00. The photographer's life, including copious diary details of his affair with Garbo. —E.C.

Walker, Alexander. *Bette Davis: A Celebration.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1986. $22.50. Sumptuous photos; the usual Walker text.

Waters, John. *Crackpot: The Obsessions of John Waters.* New York: Macmillan, 1986. $14.95.

Zetterling, Mai. *All Those Tomorrows: An Autobiography by Mai Zetterling.* New York: Grove Press, 1985. $16.95. Zetterling is an underrated director, unafraid of emotional extravagance, and this book—an unusually candid and raw account of her life as slum child, actress, director, wife—gives the reader a basis for understanding her talent. —E.C.

Critical Studies

THE WORLD WAR II COMBAT FILM

By Jeanine Basinger. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. $30.00

Basinger's approach is an interesting one, viewing more than a thousand films, culling out what meets generic criteria: American, period, combat. In consequence, she is able to chart a very particularized form within its full time frame and to note antecedents in the decade before Pearl Harbor. Her study emphasizes character placement (the soldier from Brooklyn, the token black or Hispanic or Indian), "story" (the mission, sequential deaths, military rituals like mail call), and recurring narrative devices (the war correspondent's commentary or the interior monologue of an observant soldier).

The book is sensitive to self-admitted complications in definition. Is *Rocky Mountain* a Western because its locale is the American West? No, it's a Civil War combat film hiding out in Ghost Mountain, California. Basinger traces Dudley Nichols's *Lost Patrol* story into wartime versions like *Bataan* and *Manila Calling.* In *The Fighting 69th* (World War I) key members of The Group appear: the tough sergeant, the understanding chaplain, the war correspondent, the cynic who will finally be enlightened. There's a nice section outlining what happens when women (nurses, WACs) replace male characters in films like *So Proudly We Hail* and *Cry Havoc.* Over time, Basinger finds the Combat Film to achieve a certain formularized symmetry, then to move into other discourses: the bitter comedy, the dirty fighters. Sadly, new uniforms appear for Korea and Vietnam.

Basinger is so enthusiastically enmeshed in the specifics of her subject that little time is left for theoretical considerations. Thomas Schatz's *Hollywood Genres* appears in the bibliography, but not Cawelti or Stephen Neale or the work from *Screen* and *Screen Education.* Where her study excels is in providing clear, entertaining and cogent descriptions of its material, efficiently organized by character types, iconography, and story convention. The coverage is exhaustive, although I missed Alan Ladd cutting off an enemy head in *China* (1943). Oliver Stone's *Platoon* certainly finds Basinger's subject in good health. —JOHN FELL

CINEMA AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA
Conversations with Filmmakers

By Julianne Burton. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. $22.50.

In an epoch when Latin America is becoming a major focus of United States preoccupation and policy, Julianne Burton is one of the few scholars who have devoted serious attention to the highly politicized film developments there. This book is one of the fruits of her years of travel, research, and intrepid film-viewing, and it's essential reading for anyone seeking to get oriented on what's been happening in this very interesting area.

The 20 interviews that make up the volume provide quite complete information on the work of each person, but they also serve as introductions to the film-making situations and social contexts of a wide range of nations. In addition, Burton provides a succinct opening survey of the history of Latin American cinema from its beginnings through the post-World War II years of nationalism and the beginnings of revolutionary upheavals to the present, when Latin cinema displays a great variety of producing systems, ideological stances, and relations to the North American industry.

Some 30 years are covered by the interviews, and because of the prominence of Cuban filmmakers since the revolution there, the Cuban experience figures largely in the collection: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Humberto Solás, critic Enrique Colina, and Julio García Espinosa. But Part I, on documentary, includes Fernando Birri of Argentina, Mario Handler of Uruguay,

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By Julianne Burton. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. $22.50.

In an epoch when Latin America is becoming a major focus of United States preoccupation and policy, Julianne Burton is one of the few scholars who have devoted serious attention to the highly politicized film developments there. This book is one of the fruits of her years of travel, research, and intrepid film-viewing, and it's essential reading for anyone seeking to get oriented on what's been happening in this very interesting area.

The 20 interviews that make up the volume provide quite complete information on the work of each person, but they also serve as introductions to the film-making situations and social contexts of a wide range of nations. In addition, Burton provides a succinct opening survey of the history of Latin American cinema from its beginnings through the post-World War II years of nationalism and the beginnings of revolutionary upheavals to the present, when Latin cinema displays a great variety of producing systems, ideological stances, and relations to the North American industry.

Some 30 years are covered by the interviews, and because of the prominence of Cuban filmmakers since the revolution there, the Cuban experience figures largely in the collection: Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, Humberto Solás, critic Enrique Colina, and Julio García Espinosa. But Part I, on documentary, includes Fernando Birri of Argentina, Mario Handler of Uruguay,

Jorge Silva and Marta Rodríguez of Columbia, Jorge Sanjinés of Bolivia, Patricio Guzmán of Chile, Emilio Rodríguez Vázquez and Carlos Vicinte Ibarra of Puerto Rico and Nicaragua, and Helena Solberg-Ladd of Brazil and the US. Most of these people are extremely articulate, and Burton's questioning is informed and probing.

On the fictional side the range is similarly broad. In addition to the Cubans mentioned earlier, we hear from Glauber Rocha, Nelson Pereira dos Santos and Carlos Diegues of Brazil, Antonio Eguino of Bolivia, Raul Ruíz of Chile (now working in France), and Marcela Fernández Violante of Mexico. The volume also includes interviews with several people who are not conventional directors but rather "media activists," such as Alfonso Gumacio Dagrón of Bolivia who has taught Super 8 production to peasants there and more recently in Nicaragua—a remarkable kind of activity for a middle-class person who had the privilege of studying film at IDHEC and Vincennes. This, like the other intensely thoughtful and serious interviews in the book, should provide some new models to ponder for North American film students whose ideas of cinema careers are limited to the Hollywood pattern.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

AMERICAN VISION: The Films of Frank Capra

By Raymond Carney. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. $24.95.

Raymond Carney's new work is an extraordinary achievement and undertaking, and at that only a part of a much larger undertaking. In the former instance the book represents a true fruition and a powerful defense of the auteurist impulse in film studies; among similar studies of American directors only James Naremore's *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (sadly out of print) and Gerald Mast's *Howard Hawks, Storyteller* are comparable in eloquence, thoughtfulness, maturity, and coverage. But Carney's remarkable achievements in this regard cannot be grasped apart from the context invoked throughout Carney's larger project, initiated in his (aptly titled) *American Dreaming: The Films of John Cassavetes and the American Experience,* which amounts to nothing less than an extensive rewriting of the history of film by (re)inscribing it within the context of modern art generally (beginning with the British Romantics) and of the specifically American strain of Romanticism associated preeminently with the transcendentalist instance as typified by Whitman, Emerson, Poe, and the James brothers (Henry and William).

To many readers the most striking quality of Carney's project will be the manner in which he turns the essentially European language of postmodernist criticism back on itself, turning it especially *against* the picture of high-art modernism deriving from European models against which, on Carney's reading, much American art is incorrectly measured and found wanting. Thus in *American Vision* Carney elaborates at some length on the alternately "social" and "visual realist" character of European modernism generally—a tradition culminating in the epistemological skepticism of Derrida and Foucault, but equally evident in the impressionist focus on the technologies of perception and representation which had the effect of "socializing" the visually real. Hence the fact that so much European avante-garde art, while visually disruptive, is eminently social in its underlying stance and implications; and hence as well the fact that the Edwardian strain of late Romanticism, for example, required an escape from "the felt-to-be compromising forms and forces of social expression" into "a land of romance and imagination" if "free personal or artistic expression" was to occur (p. 19).

On Carney's reading what such models of Romanticism crucially ignore in assuming that reality is both social and visually bounded is *exactly* the heritage of American Romanticism. Rather than offer artists and audiences an enervating choice between social realism and private detachment, American romanticism undertakes the far more difficult task of *living* the difference, of expressing the American dream of perpetual self-expression and -transcendence within and through and against "the forms and structures of ordinary, waking, socially defined reality," injecting "vision *into* society, rather than treating it as an alternative to society" (p. 8). Thus criticism of the paintings of Eakins and Sargent founded on European models, for example, tends to see them, in their sometimes informal poses and in the rumpled garments of

Jorge Silva and Marta Rodríguez of Columbia, Jorge Sanjinés of Bolivia, Patricio Guzmán of Chile, Emilio Rodríguez Vázquez and Carlos Vicinte Ibarra of Puerto Rico and Nicaragua, and Helena Solberg-Ladd of Brazil and the US. Most of these people are extremely articulate, and Burton's questioning is informed and probing.

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their sitters, as instances of a failed or awkward realism when, on Carney's reading, such elements "derealize" or "decenter" the normal, almost "narrative" understanding of the paintings as depictions of characters understood in a social context. It is rather the "unposed" moment which Eakins captures, a moment when the sitter's "turn" away from public scrutiny instances a visionary look or glance which moves "beyond," yet still comes to us through, the more ordinary forms of social life. To read such works "realistically," as if their objects and subjects stood directly or exclusively as a picture of social existence, is thus to misread them altogether and to lose all that is truly radical and decentering within them. It is Carney's main contention that Capra has been lost to us in exactly this fashion. To take Capra as a naive and awkward "social realist" is not to take him at all, especially when the self-reflexive quality of his films—the way Capra-the-enunciator's own efforts at self-transcendence through film are so uncannily mirrored in the efforts of his characters to forge newer, truer selves in acts of visionary self-dramatization—leads so clearly in the opposite interpretive direction.

In taking that direction, however, Carney continues to employ a language owing much to modern critical developments. Specifically, in seeking to look "beyond" the more obvious surface features of Capra's film-making, Carney repeatedly seeks out the gaps, the fissures, the silences which are symptomatic of Capra's underlying epistemological project. In an early chapter, for example, Carney uses a reading of *That Certain Thing* (1928) to describe "a triple movement" characteristic of Capra's films: a dream of self-creation (a dream made possible, quite often, by the absence of a father figure); an awakening, often ironically figured as an awakening into a *film noir* nightmare; and an "enforced return of the awakened dreamer to the world" (p. 75). And the chief interest of this model, for Carney, lies in the gaps between these movements and in the kinds of melodramatic and stylistic energy which goes into both their creation and their (often failed) recuperation. Indeed, those temporal/narrative gaps correspond to the ideological gap where American modernism finds its being. "Insofar as Capra . . . imagines the individual to be suspended between, and to owe allegiance to, two distinct and incommensurate realms—one the realm of pure vision or transcendental impulse, the other the realm of social structures and forms of understanding—and, furthermore, imagines the second realm to be at odds with the first, an expressive gap inevitably opens between them" (p. 77).

The interpretive payoffs of this approach are many and profound, as even a brief application of Carney's three-part model to *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *It's A Wonderful Life* should readily attest. But they come at some cost, of which Carney, like Capra, may not be fully aware. There is an uncanny resemblance, that is, between Capra's expressive dilemma as Carney describes it—his belief in the transcendent imagination paired with a sense of obligation to express that transcendence in social forms—and Carney's own practice. But here, we might say, it is a tradition of criticism which is the social form, and in expressing his own transcendent vision of Capra's place in American culture Carney betrays considerable ambivalence, even hostility, toward that tradition even while posing his own work as its fulfillment.

Despite the book's extraordinary length (510 pages) and its copious (largely elaborative) footnote apparatus, Carney rarely acknowledges any indebtedness to or sustained engagements with prior criticism; only seven of his nearly 180 notes refer to other Capra critics (he references his own work some 16 times) and the number of important critics altogether ignored, even in his bibliography, is striking: no reference to Sam Rohdie on *Mr. Deeds,* to Nick Browne and Charles Affron on *Mr. Smith,* to Dudley Andrew on *Meet John Doe,* to Kaja Silverman on *It's A Wonderful Life* (all in print by 1982). At times Carney seems to rely upon reader knowledge to make the critical connections; his approach is so obviously indebted to Robin Wood's "Ideology, Genre, Auteur" essay (which does appear in the bibliography) as perhaps to make that citation unnecessary. But what of the echoes of Nick Browne in Carney's discussion of "voice" in *Mr. Smith*? Has Carney *heard* Browne's voice—or is he intent upon his own voice (Carney's prose circles back and repeats points made earlier, not always to real profit) to the point of being deaf to others? Especially in light of Carney's condemnation of critical silence as regards John Cassavetes, this question is far from rhetorical. In *American*

Vision: The Films of Frank Capra Carney more than earns the right to offer rebuke. But whether such rebukes and silences are truly necessary is a question Carney might well wish to address in his subsequent and already promised studies of Chaplin and Keaton (taken together) and American painting.

—LELAND POAGUE

THE STORY OF THE LOST REFLECTION

By Paul Coates. London: Verso, 1985. $9.95.

The Story of the Lost Reflection is a stimulating, carefully composed, and highly allusive collection of notes and essays. As the work of a young British Marxist who apparently finds more of value in Pauline Kael than in Stephen Heath; who has found a way to crowd Altman, Godard, Tarkovsky, Truffaut, Skolimowski, Wajda, and Zanussi under one critical umbrella; and who knows how to write a tight sentence, this book is bound to be welcome. It is intelligent, engaged, intense—and oddly lazy.

The book begins with a powerful and nearly theoretical series of observations:

> The filmic image is an alienated reflection—an imitation of life that is perilously similar to the original. The man who has lost his reflection may experience terror when he observes it living its own life. The doubling of an image is a propagation that diminishes it, and the man who sees his own *Doppelgänger* has a weaker sense of his own identity than the man who does not. The same may be said of the society that scrutinizes itself on the cinema screen: it views the lost image of itself with near-anthropological dispassion.

This is a superb subject for a book, and it crops up briefly, or implicitly makes itself manifest, in the readings that take up the last half of the volume. One notices, every once in a while, a sentence that relates this theme to the work of a particular director. And there is one long essay—of which the book appears to be an expansion—called "Cinema, Symbolism, and the Gesamtkunstwerk," which attempts to tackle the subject thoroughly. But the argument is not developed through the book; the book is argumentative, but not *argued.* While I agree with more than half of what Coates says here, I am convinced by none of it. Coates leaves it to the reader to relate the readings to what might have been a compelling vision of post-New Wave cinema.

He gives us, for example, virtually no useful information about the E.T.A. Hoffmann story from which he has taken his title—and beyond that, tells no story. As much as he realizes and bemoans the fact that many readers will not have seen the films he discusses, he neglects to introduce us to them and jumps directly into analysis and evaluation. A few paragraphs—perhaps pointing out what Coates would consider too obvious—could have woven these readings into a truly powerful work; even a concluding chapter might have done the job. Instead we are given a series of essays that spring from aspects of the "Gesamtkunstwerk" chapter without really developing or even returning to it.

It makes perfect sense to discuss recent Polish cinema in the context of Godard, Bertolucci, Herzog, and contemporary politics, and Coates knows the material well. Where he is weak is in the explicit drawing of connections. He suggests, for example, that dramatist Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz was a significant rival and precursor of Godard, arguably more relevant than Brecht—but neglects to offer any evidence that Godard had read or seen Witkiewicz's work. Perhaps he doesn't care.

The section entitled "Fragments of a Theory of Cinema" is, in fact, utterly fragmentary and might better have been left out. The section entitled "Auteurs" and the final section on Polish cinema contain readings that are, on their own, of indubitable interest and merit. Of these, the chapters on Truffaut and Tarkovsky deserve to be widely read; they are also the most frustrating ones, the ones that might have proved Coates's points if he had taken the trouble to connect the dots. The following paragraph, from the Truffaut essay, describes Coates in this text quite precisely:

> The past tense of the speaking voice invests the viewed events with an immense sadness, and creates a sense of distance that opens up a space for Truffaut to embellish his film with devices the very virtuosity of which magnifies the feeling of remoteness. The binary opposition of *Jules and Jim*—an opposition often found in Truffaut—represents a double exclusion from identity: the film mournfully passes from one to the other like a person attempting to retie a broken thread. The continuous presence of the narrating voice on the sound-track guarantees a coherence that permits the story to be told elliptically, fleetingly. Its poignancy is that of the position of the narrator: to comprehend all is to be excluded.

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Still, if the habit of glossing and clarifying movies that declare their own or reflect their makers' alienated condition has become second nature for the postmodern audience, there should be many who will take the trouble to fill in Coates's argument for him and who will enjoy the veiled quality of his intensely engaged yet removed presence. It is his stance as alienated, remote virtuoso that demonstrates, however implicitly, what he means, and from this vantage point that he launches a barrage of critical aphorisms that are both acutely and memorably formulated. —BRUCE KAWIN

THE CINEMATIC VISION OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

By Wheeler Winston Dixon. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1986.

F. Scott Fitzgerald worked on twenty-nine real (and proposed) screenplays and only received credit for one, *Three Comrades.* Throughout his twelve year scripting career, he treated Hollywood like an obsessive lover, both resenting it and unable to leave it. His first screenplay, *Lipstick* (1927) was rejected, as were others. He feuded with producer Joseph Mankiewicz over *Three Comrades,* claiming the best parts were excised. He was dismissed from *The Women* by producer Hunt Stromberg when he tried to visually enliven the talky script and saw *Infidelity,* his most innovative effort, die at the Breen Office due to censorship problems. Shackled by a quirky personality and a penchant for drink, he was a difficult collaborator and an unreliable employee, the literary equivalent of "box office poison."

Dixon's thesis rests on two points. First, Fitzgerald honed his screenwriting style by the time he submitted *Infidelity* by "downplaying verbal expression and depending on visual techniques to express the nuances of his theme." Dixon perceptively talks about the verbose style of *Three Comrades* (which had to be cut by forty pages) and contrasts it with *Infidelity,* which revealed the characters through gestures and creative camera tracking. However, he doesn't examine what biographical or artistic forces changed Fitzgerald's technique. Did he take a screenwriting course? Do independent study? Hash it out with other writers?

Dixon's second point emphasizes the cinematic qualities in Fitzgerald's novels, attempting to trace a continuum from *The Great Gatsby* (1924) to *The Last Tycoon* (1940). With care and precision, he shows the filmic techniques in both works, like word economy and shifts in perspective. He then argues that *Tender is the Night* departs from this pattern. But he doesn't interpret why Fitzgerald's adaptation of this work—all nonstop action, no psychologizing—failed to interest backers in 1934, or why Selznick didn't explore it before producing his stilted version in 1962. Only in the unfinished *The Last Tycoon* do we find the seeds of a cinematic novel. Dixon points out the "brief, yet highly revealing character sketches," the descriptions that read like a script's visual notations, and the montage-like interactions between the producer and his colleagues—all devices he learned from scriptwriting.

The Cinematic Vision of F. Scott Fitzgerald focuses on the technics of Fitzgerald's craft, how they evolved, and their shortcomings, based not only on a talent that had no time to blossom, but also on the man's personality, his lack of tact with "superiors" and colleagues. A more fleshed-out work could have compared Fitzgerald with his colleagues, like John Howard Lawson or Herman Mankiewicz, showing how they dealt with Hollywood, the concessions they were forced to make, etc. An appendix could have contrasted Fitzgerald's versions of *The Women* and *Three Comrades* with the production versions. Dixon could have also explored studio politics more; for example, the shady matter of the Breen Office vs. *Infidelity* needs more data. Using a focused, but limited theme, Dixon has lopped off the corner of a complex subject and explored it admirably.

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CAHIERS DU CINEMA: THE 1960s

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The Cinematic Vision of F. Scott Fitzgerald focuses on the technics of Fitzgerald's craft, how they evolved, and their shortcomings, based not only on a talent that had no time to blossom, but also on the man's personality, his lack of tact with "superiors" and colleagues. A more fleshed-out work could have compared Fitzgerald with his colleagues, like John Howard Lawson or Herman Mankiewicz, showing how they dealt with Hollywood, the concessions they were forced to make, etc. An appendix could have contrasted Fitzgerald's versions of *The Women* and *Three Comrades* with the production versions. Dixon could have also explored studio politics more; for example, the shady matter of the Breen Office vs. *Infidelity* needs more data. Using a focused, but limited theme, Dixon has lopped off the corner of a complex subject and explored it admirably.

—PETER BATES

CAHIERS DU CINEMA: THE 1960s

Edited by Jim Hillier. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. $25.00.

This second volume in the four-volume project of *Cahiers* translations is introduced with a well researched and sagacious essay by Hillier, who also provides introductions to the sections ("French Cinema," "American Cinema:

Celebration," "American Cinema: Revaluation," and "Towards a New Cinema/New Criticism"). Since the New Wave directors, many of whom were associated with the magazine, were flying high during the early part of this decade, and complex political tensions became the magazine's focus after 1968, this volume has great interest from several different perspectives.

By 1962, Truffaut felt that "the kind of cinema I used to champion is now with us," and Godard similarly felt the battle was over. This heroic era now seems very long ago, especially since the mainstay of current French cinema is vapid comedies so feeble they even make us look back nostalgically at the *"cinéma de qualité"* that *Cahiers* so despised; that battle may have been won, but the war went on, and badly. Hence the vivid, passionately intelligent writing that characterized the *Cahiers* crew now seems especially touching: in distant retrospect they figure as a band of almost mythical critical giants, thrusting and parrying brother against brother. (There were no sisters—in this volume only two collective contributions, both from 1968, bear a female name, Sylvia Pierre's—which may help explain some *Cahiers* critical tastes, and Hillier takes note of a "considerable misogyny.")

A large proportion of serious creative work seems to get done when a relatively compact group of talented people find themselves in some kind of shared intellectual hothouse; it happens fairly often in science, but in the humanities the French—or to put it more precisely, Parisians—seem to have a special gift for the generation of cadres of bright people who love to argue with each other in public. As it happened, Henri Langlois and his Cinémathèque provided an ideal hothouse. The fact that a whole film-starved wartime generation was coming of age, the presence of a generous and fertile older mind in André Bazin, and lucky, unpredictable accidents of talent and interest and friendship helped produce not only *Cahiers* but (as Hillier properly points out) the even more passionate—and like *Cahiers,* still lively—leftist journal *Positif,** and also the great efflorescence of the *cinéclubs* throughout France. The fact that small-scale, artisanal film production was still common in France gave the aspiring directors among the *Cahiers* group an opening to begin—and even more important to continue—highly personal film-making. By contrast, American new talents, who are normally isolated individuals lacking a strong supporting group of co-thinkers, get co-opted by the Hollywood machine with their second films. A film culture of the vividness of France in the fifties and sixties we may not see again anywhere; but if there is a lesson in all this for Americans, I suspect it is that the intellectual and critical base that Paris then provided defended cinema against the effects of greed—personal and corporate both. Oddly enough, in the American tradition the only comparable hothouse effect we have had was inadvertently created by the old-line Hollywood moguls; the anti-intellectual and cynical company-town environment they created had the effect of fomenting quiet cabals of talented people who, unlike their French counterparts, kept their mouths shut—and sometimes were able to produce astonishing films.

Hillier, who has studied carefully the changes of editorial staff and direction during the decade, discusses the issues underlying *Cahiers* critical work with exemplary learning and commonsense. He gives a judicious account of the rise of auteurism and the subsequent turn toward politicized questions of "new cinema" which either left auteurism aside or actively challenged it—inspired partly by a disenchantment with an increasingly militarist America. There are ample notes to facilitate further research.

The selections themselves are very readably translated, although as Hillier points out they sometimes posed tricky problems of vocabulary, particularly with *auteur* and *mise en scène.* The critical stars of this volume are Moullet, Labarthe, Comolli, Hoveyda, Douchet, Narboni, Fieschi; because they were busy making films by this time, Truffaut, Godard, Rohmer (after his displacement as editor), and Rivette appear in interviews—which, of course, are often just as articulate as articles would have been. There is an endless fascination in piecing out relationships between the material reprinted here and the film-making that paralleled and followed it. —E.C.

* It is curious, however, that Hillier's sympathy toward *Positif* seems to miss essential aspects of a critical position with surrealist as well as traditional leftwing antecedents: he feels it was "schizophrenic" for *Positif* to deal with eroticism and support for the Estates-General of Cinema in the same issue.

FICTION, FILM, AND F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

By Gene D. Phillips, SJ. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's life and career are entangled with Hollywood in ways that are of enduring interest, and yet this book mostly skims the more interesting possibilities, as it makes its routinely scholarly remarks on what the movies have made of Fitzgerald and his work. Father Phillips seems inclined to argue that some of the films from Fitzgerald's work are underrated, but he musters very little in the way of compelling evidence for such views, and thus tends sometimes to damn with faint praise instead. It is a book which is stronger on bibliography than on criticism, with its rather rudimentary comments on the literature and the subsequent films chiefly serving to magnify the most unpromising aspects of the subject.

The book has a foreword by Budd Schulberg and a preface by Dewitt Bodeen, a prologue and an epilogue and a couple of short chapters on Fitzgerald as screenwriter—to go with six chapters and 124 pages focused on the films made from Fitzgerald's fiction. Much of what Phillips has written here zips through territory (including biographical and literary background) that has already been covered more satisfactorily by Aaron Latham's *Crazy Sundays: F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood* (1972). Phillips provides more detail on some silent-era adaptations and has the advantage of being able to refer to the several adaptations and biographical productions that have been done since the appearance of Latham's book; he is also able to draw on material that did not play a role in Latham's account—e.g., the published notes of Malcolm Lowry's attempt to adapt *Tender Is the Night* for the screen.

But even these small advantages shrink under Phillips's simplified approach to the literary originals and to the films and the attendant issues of adaptation. When he claims that the main character's "owning up" to his responsiblities and failings is what makes "Babylon Revisited" into "one of Fitzgerald's best [stories]," he's betraying a moralistic aesthetic which seems almost beside the point; when he steers his commentary on *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (the film based on "Babylon Revisited") toward the pseudo-issue of "smiles" versus "tears," he's lowered the discussion to a level of easy contrasts and perfunctory judgments. His claim that the sight of Alan Ladd "secretly" punching out a hoodlum cohort is true to the original spirit of *The Great Gatsby* suggests a very reductive sense of what that novel's "spirit" is and misses altogether the realm of nuance in which Jay Gatsby is a shimmering figure of mystery whose underworld connections are kept at a distance by social veneer and near-mastery of facades. The 1949 film's emphatic view of Gatsby's gangster side loses touch with Fitzgerald precisely because it gives such literal-minded and stereotypical form to what was originally an elusive element of an elusive character. Such complexities are not entirely foreign to this book, but they play an intermittent role, at best, in Phillips's observations.

—PETER HOGUE

STEVEN SPIELBERG

By Donald R. Mott and Cheryl McAllister Saunders. Boston: Twayne/G. K. Hall, 1986. $18.95.

For the last ten years or so Twayne publications of Boston has published a useful series of scholarly books on the great film-makers. Unfortunately, this latest edition represents something of an all-time low, a failure both of inspiration and scholarship.

Most of the faults of the book can easily be traced to a simple question. Does Spielberg, whom critic Pauline Kael accuses of helping to "infantilize" American culture, merit and provide enough material for a serious study? Unlike most of the other directors in the series, Spielberg and his films have hardly stood the test of time, only of the box office. It seems a little early and the evidence a little meager for pronouncements of greatness. Because of this, material for scholarship or even interesting reading is a little thin. However, if one were to try, perhaps his great popularity might make the basis for a book, pointing the way to some interesting observations about American society. Another approach might focus on the director's technique, certainly among the most expert in modern-day Hollywood.

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book who appear to have undertaken it simply because Spielberg's films have made a lot of money; the study is nothing more than a fan article hiding under the trapping of scholarship. We start with Spielberg's boyhood and move dully forward through his career with numerous awe-struck quotes from *Variety*'s box-office report, with an occasional critical blurb thrown in. Along the way we get some inadvertently hilarious stabs at scholarship including a supposed "structural analysis" of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* which turns out to be only a retelling of the plot. Most of the information included is very familiar and unfortunately the writing is pedestrian.

All of this serves neither the supposed serious intentions of the series nor Mr. Spielberg's many fans who might better be served by the more frankly pop *The Steven Spielberg Story* by Tony Crawley. It is unfortunate to report that even if the Twayne book was intended as a pop study that also has been bungled because the book contains no illustrations. This seems a serious limitation for a work about a director known for his visuals and "comic book" style. In fairness this lack of pictures seems to be at Spielberg's request though it is a very curious blunder for one so usually adept at personal publicity.

While some of the Twayne series have fallen short of brilliance, the books have served a useful purpose, particularly when they have dealt with great film-makers whose work had yet to be explored. I'm thinking particularly of the books on Clair, Mizoguchi, and Lindsay Anderson. With the departure of Warren French from the editorship of the series one can only hope that this latest volume does not signal a deterioration in the standards of what has been a useful and long-lived effort. —TOM KING

POWER AND PARANOIA
History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940-1950

By Dana Polan. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Carlos Fuentes recalls that Borges "once proposed that if realism were to be real, we would have to have only one map of the world, and that would be a huge paper map covering the world in its physical entirety." The representation of reality needs to envelop its referent completely, attempting, however futilely, to become the very reality it represents, at the same time hiding that reality, refiguring it, giving it significant form.

This is, essentially, Dana Polan's view of narrative, which is not simply a story told or the telling of it, but the way a culture, at any given moment of its history, defines and charts itself in its representations. Narrative is the culture's voice, its discourse, and by attending to the forms of narrative we understand the contours of the culture's fantasies and contradictions. Polan watches, reads, listens to the film and popular literary narratives of the forties. He examines how they map out landscapes of hope and despair, of desire and fear, form representations that attempt—desperately, foolishly—to rationalize and order events and give them function and purpose.

Power and Paranoia stands as an important example of post-structuralist cultural criticism. Certain elements of its methodology must be understood in order to know what it does and does not do. This is not history in the usual sense. Although Polan lays out the chapters in rough chronology, starting with the war film and ending with the end-of-the-decade films that signified major cultural-perceptual changes resulting from the war and the flowering of consumer capitalism, the book does not itself offer a chronological narrative of the decade. The organization focuses on changes in narrative directions and story-telling functions—on the ways films spoke or mis-spoke the realities of the period. With a few exceptions (such as strong readings of Lang's *Manhunt* and Daves's *Pride of the Marines* and its postwar complement, *Dark Passage*), Polan does not engage in intensive, close analysis of individual films. Rather, history and films (both familiar titles and long forgotten, obscure, apparently trivial works which are redeemed when Polan discovers in them key movements of the decade), along with some examples from advertisements, popular fiction, and nonfiction, become contributions to a broader analysis of narrative formulations, larger stories the culture tells itself in hopes of explaining what is going on. No individual figures—film-makers, stars,

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statesman, workers—are foregrounded. The study is of texts, contexts, and the positioning of ideological response. This is a key to the post-structuralist enterprise, where all figures, including the film viewer, are absorbed into narrative structures, subjected to their movements and contradictions, continually positioned and repositioned. "The war period," Polan writes, "builds a representation of itself as a moment where disparate forces become interchangeable as central subjects all: Roosevelt, small-town America, the G.I., the army officers, are all ultimate and often equivalent signifiers that wartime America will tell its stories around."

Happily, unlike some post-structuralist texts, Polan's writing is without obfuscation. Though a sentence may occasionally gnarl up, the expression is clear, while the exposition of theory and application winds intricately in and out of films and their shifting, often self-contradicting subjects. Polan moves from the war film through the representations of science, to politics (especially the politics of adjustment and narratives of authority), to the lost figure in the late-forties films of the dark city, and the redemptive-oppressive, commodity forms of spectacle. Polan charts an ideology of limits voiced in narratives of denial and promise, of order always at the mercy of disorder, of desire and its refusal. The forties emerge from this study as a decade in which change and conflict (on both the global and individual level) were simultaneously recognized and denied, where narratives expressed power and purpose, fear and irresolution simultaneously. "In the forties . . . , authority can seem all the more mythic, all the more fictional. What historians have described as the breakdown of the classic studio system may also be the breakdown of that system's ability to confidently tell its stories. Indeed, in the moment of victory and after, where even the forcing of narrative resolution through commitment to the war effort will be lacking, narrative can seem to turn fundamentally unable to move forward."

You will not so much learn about the history of the forties in *Power and Paranoia,* as you will the ways in which a culture works its history out through narratives, how a culture *produces* itself in all of its contradictions while attempting to map out the contours of its realities.

—ROBERT P. KOLKER

JOHN FORD

By Peter Stowell. Boston: Twayne, 1986. $16.95.

This is a structuralist study of 14 films. Stowell, a professor of film and literature at Florida State University, discerns John Ford as a mythmaker and six myths as essential to the American dream (and to Ford)—American agrarianism, individualism, and civilization, the American frontier and democrat, the American Adam. He does not justify this selection, nor labor to keep the myths differentiated (though they title his chapters) but, a disciple of Northrop Frye, lets them flow together as an American species of the romance genre: minglings of the real and the marvelous to parallel the Fordian dialectic of myth and history.

Stowell is an interesting and perceptive critic. I particularly enjoyed his insights into *Stagecoach's* archetyping and Wyatt Earp's wilderness-civilization ambivalence in *My Darling Clementine,* and his fine essays on *Grapes of Wrath* and *Drums along the Mohawk.* He champions Ford as a complex artist, spiritedly defends his depictions of women, refutes evil calumnies of racism, militarism, and pollyanna sentiments, and defines Ford as a Jeffersonian democrat. All of which is a welcome palliative to decades of excremental abuse by tendentious rabble-rousers.

I suspect, though, that one could dispute Stowell's myth-model for America. I shall dispute it for Ford. It suits him like a too-small dog collar. The frontier, Stowell argues, apropos of *Young Mr. Lincoln,* was Ford's preferred setting, for there alone democracy and the humane spirit of law can flourish, neither corrupted by civilization nor threatened by wilderness. The scheme is neat, but is it valid? A host of critics to the contrary, "wilderness" does not really exist in Ford's films, for moral culturation blooms wherever humans are (Indians included). Democracy does not flourish on the frontier. And civilization and Ford's heroes face similar challenges whether in frontier, town, or city setting.

Is Stowell's thesis, then, an a priori to which facts must conform willynilly? Well, he makes *Fort Apache* assert that society has a responsibility "to exploit certain facts and suppress others in the quest to create myths . . . , [to sacrifice] human beings and truths . . . so that

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myths may live"! Since Ford is debunking the myths and unsuppressing the truth, such a reading is dubious. But it sure is structuralism with a vengeance.

And indeed it is with Stowell's structuralist methodology that my deepest quarrels lie. Like most genre critics, he has a tendency to neglect early films and to discount their ambivalences and complexities. His citing of Will Rogers, for example, as Ford's first mythic hero incarnating the Adamic myth overlooks the extent to which Rogers was following in Harry Carey's footsteps. And worse, the thesis that Rogers's personas maintain Rousseauian innocence is tenable only by ignoring, as Stowell does, Rogers's disingenuous calculation in *Judge Priest* ("The first thing I learned in politics was when to say 'ain't' "), his realization of his gullibility and the world's corruption in *Steamboat Round the Bend,* and the hucksterish trickery and iconoclasm by which, in that film, he earns his living and saves his nephew from naîveté's fatal consequences. But Stowell sees "no conflicts, no real violence" in *Steamboat,* only an Edenic world with a "flimsy excuse" of a plot.

Like many genre critics, Stowell loves theory more than sampling. His elaborate syntagmatic /diachronic charts analyzing *Stagecoach* and *The Searchers* yield no insights unapparent without such paraphrenalia, while his attempt to define Ford stylistically on the basis of two pictures strikes me as illicit. His attempts at contrast, meanwhile, flounder on his distance from prewar Ford. He argues that Ford changed his style in the 1950s to achieve "greater psychological realism"—i.e., the heroes are "more visibly complex" and allow their private moments to affect their public persona. But Judge Priest and Lincoln, to cite only two 1930s heroes, strike me as at least as complex as any movie characters one is likely to encounter, and they slobber their emotions quite publicly (Priest's courtroom whine, Lincoln's demented conduct at the ball), as do such tortured figures as *Pilgrimage's* mother, *Arrowsmith's* doctor, and *How Green Was My Valley's* minister ('31–'41). True, *Stagecoach's* Ringo is less tortured than *The Searchers'* Ethan (though arguably not less obsessive), but he is an anomalous Fordian hero, not a basis for contrast; and even so his public persona utterly incarnates his private emotions, as does *Grapes'* Tom Joad's.

Structuralism's insensitivity to character is typical of narrative analysis. However rich Ford's mythic aspects, reading him from myth's viewpoint, and hence subordinating him to a theory, is impoverishing. His characters get reduced to pawns of mythic structures and generic conventions. They lose their moral autonomy, their free will, their ability to sin. They perish as human beings. True, Ford's characters *are* determined by societal forces, by vast currents of history, and therefore also by myths (all of which the films depict with Balzacian detail). But Ford's culture was Catholic, not just American, and his determinism is *Augustinian*—a determinism in dialectic with existentialism—and therefore partakes of a whole set of Christian myths, in which man's terrifying freedom within a predestined cosmos looms as the great underlying mystery. Stowell acutely analyzes the complex structural ambivalences that motivate *Liberty Valance's* characters, but I would argue that he misses much of the movie's pathos and tragedy, because his methodology misses the fact that the characters *choose.*

But then Stowell, to my mind, generally underestimates the breadth of Ford's existentialism. He compresses him on one side by arguing that he "could not and did not indulge in dead-end despair" and on the other side by arguing that he lacks the "crucial . . . myth of the pursuit of happiness." Is not *7 Women* dead-end despair? Are not *Steamboat Round the Bend* and *Wagon Master* pursuits of happiness? Ford, unlike Brecht, does not pity the land that needs a hero, Stowell claims. But the contrary is true, and it is structuralism that lacks pity. For Ford's heroes are not merely mediators between civilization and wilderness. They appear only when pitiable situations become intolerable. And far from being governed by mythic structures, they are moral innovators, defiers of tradition, outsiders by definition, Christ figures who generate *new* myths. It is not "the frontier" that humanizes law in *Young Mr. Lincoln,* as Stowell would have us believe, it is Mr. Lincoln.

Peter Stowell's John Ford, then, is not my John Ford, and it is likely to be admired for all the wrong reasons. But it's still a John Ford on the side of the angels. And a book meriting attention. —TAG GALLAGHER

Baltake, Joe. *Jack Lemmon: His Films and Career,* rev. ed. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1986. $12.95 paper. Credits, brief commentaries, review quotes, lots of pictures.

Barr, Charles, ed. *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema.* London: British Film Institute and New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986. $18.95 paper. Barr, who is a first-rate critical intelligence, opens this collection of essays with notes on the curious self-laceration of the British critical tradition (encouraged, of course, by the disdain of critics elsewhere). But then—if the British are "temperamentally unsuited" to cinema, as Satyajit Ray once alleged, what are we to make of Chaplin and Hitchcock? (And Michael Powell?) Barr develops a dialectic of emotional repression and expression which could be useful in looking at the new films now coming out of Britain, and the ensuing essays describe and critique various recent trends and personalities. —E.C.

Ciment, Michel. *John Boorman.* Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986. $49.95. This gorgeous volume features hundreds of illustrations (a lot of them in full color) and extensive interviews with Boorman, who is full of creative ideas as well as interesting reflections on the production histories of his films. Ciment asks stimulating questions, and also contributes excellent introductory essays on each film—giving its production background, noting features of Boorman's conception and execution, and sometimes making perceptive critical comments. —E.C.

Drew, William M. *D. W. Griffith's* INTOLERANCE: *Its Genesis and Its Vision.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1986. $18.95. This well researched volume redresses the imbalance of attention to that other Griffith masterwork, *Birth of a Nation.* Ironically enough, *Intolerance* was damned by conservative reviewers and ignored by a nation wallowing away from Progressivism toward the get-rich-quick ethos of the twenties, but it was a triumph elsewhere in the post-World War I years—including the then new Soviet Union, where it played steadily for ten years. Drew mounts a cogent argument that the liberal line was really stronger in Griffith's work, taken as a whole, than the racist melodrama of *Birth* leads most people, including film historians, to believe. —E.C.

Gehring, Wes D. *Screwball Comedy: A Genre of Madcap Romance.* New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. $29.95 cloth. Gehring offers many perceptive observations on the genre's structural peculiarities, its outstanding directors and performers, and some of the attempts that have been made to apply Bergson's and others' ideas to explaining comedy. He has an enthusiastic and not particularly system-prone mind, which is probably ideal for the task. —E.C.

Green, Martin, and John Swan. *The Triumph of Pierrot: The Commedia dell'Arte and the Modern Imagination.* New York: Macmillan, 1986. $25.00. Only a few words, and none of them terribly penetrating, about Chaplin, Fellini, *Les Enfants du paradis.* —E.C.

Hogan, David J. *Dark Romance: Sexuality in the Horror Film.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1986. $25.95 cloth. Hogan's discovery of sex in the horror film is not unlike finding allusions to aquatic mammals in *Moby Dick*—to borrow Nabokov's complaint about a critic who traced sexual references in *Lolita.* Nothing much amiss in the approach, except that it turns meaninglessly encyclopedic. Often losing track of his stated topic, Hogan provides a plot-and-commentary run-through of the horror genre, from *The Golem* to David Cronenberg, with stress on English-language cinemas. It's an intelligently organized and well-written survey, casting its net wide enough to catch *Taxi Driver* and *Meshes of the Afternoon.* While there's nothing rigorous here (*à bas* Freud, *viva* Freund), there are entertaining juxtapositions—*Star Wars* and *Peeping Tom* as evil father/son tales, descended from *Frankenstein* (and equal time for manipulated daughters, *Metropolis* to *Frankenstein Created Woman*). The chapter on Hitchcock is shallow, but those on actress Barbara Steele and director Edward D. Wood should have one searching out revivals of *Black Sunday* (1960) and *Bride of Monster.* —SCOTT SIMMON

Huss, Roy. *The Mindscapes of Art: Dimensions of the Psyche in Fiction, Drama, and Film.* Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1986. $28.50. Psychoanalytic observations on a series of issues that recur in the narrative arts.

Jackson, Kathy Merlock. *Images of Children in American Film: A Sociocultural Analysis.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1986. $22.50. Thematic analysis of the considerable sea-changes in film treatment of children.

Kaplan, Alice Yaeger. *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. $35.00 cloth, $14.95 paper. Interesting sections on the fascist writers Bardèche and Brasillach, who wrote the first attempted world film history; includes interview with the testy Bardèche. —E.C.

Kinnard, Roy and R. J. Vitone. *The American Films of Michael Curtiz.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986. $15.00. General descriptions.

McCarty, John. *Psychos: Eighty Years of Mad Movies, Maniacs and Murderous Deeds.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986. $12.95. Not gore-mongering, but quite intelligent commentary on several hundred films and their making. —E.C.

Mackinnon, Kenneth. *Greek Tragedy into Film.* Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986. $49.50. After reviewing the perspectives of Kracauer, Bazin, et al. on filmed theater, Mackinnon

(a classicist familiar with Marx and Freud) provides a compact survey of the films, giving extended attention to Pasolini's highly problematic *Oedipus Rex* with its "clearly un-Sophoclean elements," and his *Medea*. —E.C.

Martin, Linda and Kerry Seagrave. *Women in Comedy*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1986. $19.95. Sixty-nine sequential little essays describe women comics from Lotta Crabtree to Robin Tyler. Perhaps the comic personae of dumb blondes and manchasers had their counterparts among bumbling husbands and ignorant yokels, but Martin and Seagrave would argue that women faced far greater obstacles in a culture grounded by male sensibilities. The Canadian authors build an historical case on cultural prejudices about female humor and masculine vulnerabilities to sexist digs. The listings run from music hall figures like Nora Bayes and Eva Tanguay through silent movie performers, thirties radio clowns, forties and fifties film stars, TV comedians, and current nightclub figures: a procession of slow liberation. To this male reader, the writers seem at times to subscribe too fully to popular simplifications about their subjects. Jane Ace and Gracie Allen hardly projected stupidity (p. 104); rather, their wit betrayed subtle, oblique intelligence. Of course, there's also a tradition of malapropisms and word plays in burlesque (Webber and Fields) and on Broadway (Chico and Groucho). Martha Raye, by the way, was a fine jazz singer; she recorded with Charlie Barnet as "Margie Reed" in the mid-forties. The book's absence of an index is to be regretted—so much research has figured in its production. —JOHN FELL

Quirk, Lawrence J. *The Complete Films of William Powell*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1986. $15.95. Introductory essay, capsule comments with credits, plenty of photos and jocose captions. —E.C.

_____. *Lauren Bacall: Her Films and Career*. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1986. $19.95 cloth.

_____. *Margaret Sullavan: Child of Fate*. New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $14.95. At Harvard, in 1928, a classmate told Henry Fonda, of Margaret Sullavan, "You'll fall for her yourself, Hank—everyone does, in time." And everyone did: Fonda, other actors (such as James Stewart), producers, directors, movie fans, and critics—such as for instance Otis Ferguson, who confessed in his February 1940 review of *The Shop around the Corner* that "Margaret Sullavan does something peculiarly basic to me," and who elsewhere remarked upon her "slight but vibrant loveliness of face and spirit . . ." The one person who seems not to have fallen for Sullavan was Sullavan. Insecure and willful, she progresses, in Quirk's who-said-what-about-whom biography, from young "hellcat" to real-life tragedienne, with only a happy eight-year run as loving wife (to Leland Hayward) and mother interrupting the tale of self-doubt and vituperation. In interviews, Sullavan spoke in generalities; in daily life, in invective, at least until "mellowed" by marriage to Hayward in 1936. She had the acerbity of a Mae West or a W. C. Fields, without, it seems, the wit. At her admirably feistiest here, she "outbullies" Louis B. Mayer; at her pettiest, she trades insults with Katharine Hepburn. This book is worth a look, however, for its impressive accumulation of reports, from all quarters, throughout her career, of Sullavan's galvanizing effect on the actors around her on stage and set. Clearly, her colleagues detected in her what she herself never quite could, the presence of that remarkable, quiet vitality, obvious still in the sixteen films which she made between 1933 and 1950.
—DON WILLIS

Rangoonwalla, Firoze. *Satyajit Ray's Art*. New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1982. 134 pages. £10.00. An embarrassment, both to its subject and to its readers. The book shows no original research; it has nothing that is interesting or worthwhile to say about Ray's films; and it is written in a style that is a mixture of the ponderous and the breezy. The "career" chapters have the value of an art-theater program note, and the middle chapters, where Ray's directorial intentions are juxtaposed with Rangoonwalla's evaluation of his artistic achievements, merely recycle warmed-up arguments; what passes for criticism are banalities and, frequently, summary of plot lines. The author's interview with Ray later in the book is equally disappointing, for most of the questions that he asks Ray are either routine or inane.
—GAUTHAM KUNDU

Richie, Donald. *Viewing Film*. Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1986. ¥1000. Brief essay on how films are more than story, focussing on *Potemkin, La Régle du jeu, Citizen Kane,* and *Tokyo Monogatari*. English text, notes in Japanese.

Russo, John. *The Complete "Night of the Living Dead" Filmbook*. New York: Harmony Books, 1986. $10.95 (paperback). Even colorization will probably not tame *Night of the Living Dead,* nor will this filmbook, which tells you more than you really may care to know about the movie's production and critical and commercial reception. Like *Diabolique, Eyes without a Face,* and *Psycho* before it—and *The Exorcist, The Texas Chain Saw Massacre,* and *Rabid* after it—*Night of the Living Dead* went "too far," and that's what sets it apart from the general run of horror movies. Films of its specialized ilk are made to be loved/hated, to upset and excite, to create a sensation, and they succeed. Occasionally—as in the case, for instance, of *Eyes without a Face*—they do more than create a sensation, they also work on audiences in more subtly insinuating, provoking ways.
—DON WILLIS

Sarris, Andrew. *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968. $9.95 paper. Now includes "The Auteur Theory Revisited" (1977).

Sinyard, Neil. *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $27.50. Brief observations on how Shakespeare, James, Lawrence, Hardy, Orwell, Pinter, and Agee have fared on screen. Sinyard also deals with "kindred spirits" (Dickens and Chaplin, Twain and Ford, Greene and Hitchcock, Conrad and Welles) in brief and sketchy essays. —E.C.

Sobchack, Vivian. *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film.* New York: Ungar, 1987. $14.95 paper. *Screening Space* is an updating of Sobchack's *The Limits of Infinity: The American Science Fiction Film, 1950–1975.* (The original version was reviewed by William Johnson in the Summer 1980 *FQ.*) In an all-new, 100-page section, she compares and contrasts "mainstream" and "marginal" science fiction films of the past decade. More than time, however, separates the earlier, more readable material here from the more recent, which reveals Sobchack attempting to keep up with the methodological Joneses. The new "Postfuturism" section sports the very latest in verbs: the contemporary sf film is seen, variously, to "narrativize," "totalize," "nostalgize," and "periodize." Adjectives ("de-signed and re-signed," "Co-Here/nt") are dismantled, then patched up with hyphens and slashes. Nouns and their modifiers ("convulsively motivated activity," "excess scenography," "spacial deflation and inflation") are joined together in unholy matrimony. The added section is a grammatical obstacle course—the ideas are there, the problem is getting at them. Antidote: turn to the sections (in the same book!) reprinted from the earlier edition and discover lovely, uncluttered, evocative sentences like "If the horror film is infrared (with its moral passions, its magical and religious motifs), then the sf film is ultraviolet (cool and intellectual, empirically oriented."

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Waller, Gregory A. *The Living and the Undead: From Stoker's "Dracula" to Romero's "Dawn of the Dead."* Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986. $28.95. Waller analyzes "the process of [narrative] repetition and variation" in the horror-story subgenre which he calls "the living and the undead." But while the sociological points are occasionally telling, and the author has certainly done his homework, or research, *The Living and the Undead* too often threatens to reduce to an inventory of novel, short story, play, and movie plots. (The book was not intended as a thesaurus.) He does succeed in capturing some of the obscene force of *Night of the Living Dead,* but his too formulaic us-and-them (the living and the undead) approach fails to catch the still startling savagery of the Stoker original (is *Dracula* "above all" the story of the forming of a "moral community"?), the sense of fate evoked so chillingly in Murnau's *Nosferatu,* and the dynamic/horrific drive of the Hammer *Horror of Dracula* and the Hawks-Lederer *The Thing.* The unwieldly title phrase (as also another favorite, "wild work") is repeated again and again within the text.

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Wexman, Virginia Wright. *Roman Polanski.* Boston: Twayne, 1985. Polanski's edgy modernism gave way, Wexman argues, to a more classic and almost romantic style in *Chinatown* (where he was forced in that direction by Hollywood imperatives) and in *Tess* (after his flight to Europe). She provides extended, sensitive readings of those two films, and briefer ones of his earlier work, going back to his student films in Poland. Her focus is partly on the sexual-psychological issues that Polanski has always addressed, and partly on the stylistic modes in which he has worked, with attention to genre aspects and the powerful visual effects Polanski has always been capable of. —E.C.

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History

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The Motion Picture Industry in the USSR, 1972-1982

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IN THE SERVICE OF THE STATE:
The Cinema of Alexander Dovzhenko

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In Gorbachev's Russia, media and the arts have been prime beneficiaries of the *glasnost* ("openness") campaign. For Soviet cinema, the campaign is yielding rich rewards. Old figures have been swept out of leadership positions in various sectors of the Soviet cinema bureaucracy, new production and distribution policies are underway, there are insistent calls for attention to previously taboo subjects, and—to the delight of audiences in the USSR and abroad—many banned films, some made as long ago as the early 1970s, are rolling off the shelves onto the screen. Are we at the edge of a renaissance of

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Soviet cinema after years of mediocrity lit up by the occasional masterpiece or by the glint of unfulfilled promise? The new books on Soviet cinema of the past suggest how difficult it has been to maintain creative vitality in a milieu where political/idological variables and bureaucratic obtuseness hover constantly over film production. These slim volumes by Golovskoy and Kepley, although very different in intent and design, are convenient bookends for the subject of Soviet cinema, one set in the epoch of Stalin, the other in the last decade of the Brezhnev era.

Kepley, a professor of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin, has written a capable introduction to the work of the Soviet Ukrainian master, Alexander Dovzhenko, whose mature films of the 1920s and '30s still rank among the most beautiful (and often most baffling) to come out of the USSR. Dovzhenko, an intellectual with peasant roots, had a checkered career as a teacher, soldier, diplomat, and political cartoonist before settling in cinema in 1926, at the age of 32. Here, Dovzhenko quickly took his place among a dazzling array of early Soviet directors—Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Vertov. His was a special place with a special feel and idiom. Dovzhenko had an odd way of translating his Bolshevik commitments into film. His narratives are puzzling, his characters fantastic, his flora and fauna respond humanly, and his camera can't get enough of sky, landscape, horizon. Small wonder that we remember him as the preeminent poet and lyricist of the early Soviet screen.

And this is exactly what bothers Kepley, that we remember this side of Dovzhenko and not his political commitments, or the political issues and historical moments that gave rise to his films. There is a tension at the center of Dovzhenko's work, Kepley tells us, pitting the "didactic strain" against the "pastoral tradition," the "lyrical poet" against the "modern polemicist." Yet, "few filmmakers, Soviet or otherwise," Kepley asserts, "fashioned a more topical cinematic corpus."

I suspect that what we have here is a non-thesis. All the major Soviet directors have suffered from (or been energized by?) a creative "tension" at the "center" of their work. This was especially true in the first decades of Soviet rule when there were powerful stimuli for didacticism—the Revolution, Civil War, the convulsions of peasant collectivization and rapid industrialization, the sense of isolation, yet hope, amid the capitalist encirclement. Soviet directors were willing "engineers of the human soul," to use Stalin's crude image; they were dedicated to advancing what were accepted as the noble aims of Soviet socialism. And if not willing, too bad. Willing or not, they were all *In the Service of the State.* The real problem, not Dovzhenko's alone, was reconciling private visions with public purposes, creating, that is, art (a subtle didacticism) and not propaganda.

Dovzhenko could rightly tell a conference of Soviet cinematographers in 1935 that "The artists of the Soviet Union have created an art founded on 'yes,' on the conception: I uplift, I inspire, I educate." But his own film language was so idiosyncratic that he might have added for himself, "I mystify." At least that's the way Soviet critics responded to his finest films (*Zvenigora,* 1928; *Arsenal,* 1929; *Earth,* 1930; *Ivan,* 1932). Kepley does a good job of showing how these and other films were occasioned by specific events and issues in the USSR—the Civil War was the source for *Arsenal,* collectivization for *Earth,* building the Dneprostroi hydroelectric complex for *Ivan,* and so on. Kepley also summarizes each film and calls attention to another important duality in Dovzhenko's political esthetics, the equal but sometimes conflicting appeals to both tradition and to revolutionary modernization. In *Earth,* for example, Dovzhenko tries to show how the new collective farm structure and the tractor (the archetypal symbol of Soviet agricultural modernization) blend into the habitual rhythms of peasant life. All of this is helpful, as is Kepley's appended chronology of Dovzhenko's life and works, together with a complete listing of film credits. But the book need not be gussied up with references to the theories of Louis Althusser and Terry Eagleton. These seem to me to boil down to some self-evident axioms about the importance of understanding all art production in its historical context, and how in Soviet Russia, in particular, there existed an acute conjunction of the backward and the modern that was bound to affect the character of its art.

If we are to evaluate Dovzhenko's films according to historical context and not solely by internal esthetic criteria—and Kepley is right to do this; as an historian I applaud this method—then something else intrudes, though

no fault of Dovzhenko. Like other directors, he was compelled to *falsify* the historical record. In *Earth* he had to elide the state-directed violence that crushed Ukrainian peasant resistance to the collectivization campaign; in *Shchors* (1939) he had to remove historical characters from the screenplay because they had just been politically unpersoned; in *Michurin* (1948) he had to exalt the pseudoscientific nonsense of Lysenkoism. Better, then, for Dovzhenko's sake, and *pace* Kepley, to dwell on his poetry and not his polemics.

Shifting from the classic to the more recent era of Soviet cinema, picture the following: a Soviet cinema insider, a graduate of the famous film institute in Moscow (VGIK), and a writer and editor for important publishing houses and periodicals specializing in film, emigrates to the United States in 1981. Someone debriefs him; no, no one sinister, just someone interested in Soviet film sits the immigrant down one night and over food and drink asks him to *tell me everything.* A tape recorder is turned on, the tape is transcribed and loosely edited, and the result is the basis for a book on *The Motion Picture Industry in the USSR, 1972-1982.*

Now, I don't know if that's the genesis of Val Golovskoy's fascinating book, but it sure reads that way. Part film journalism, part Hedda Hopper, part Kremlinology (the study of political power through personalities and networks of patronage), part settling old scores, part socio-economic analysis, and sometimes thoughtful reflection, the book is amusing, sardonic, and always informative, if often sloppy. Dare we say it is very Russian? The overall effect, what with its causeries, diary ("A Typical Week in the Life of a Film Magazine Editor"), a "Who's Who in Soviet Film Criticism" (a portion of which is a sort of Enemies List), an afterword (by John Rimberg), and miscellaneous appendices (including revealing excerpts from internal studio newsletters), is very cinematic, a montage in print about Soviet cinema during a troubled period.

The text begins with a survey of the ministerial-level agency controlling the Soviet film industry, Goskino—the State Committee for Motion Pictures. Typically, the first sentences are casual: Goskino "was established approximately ten years ago. In 1972 the administration was given additional authority and privileges." Why "approximately"? We know this is a new book, published in 1986; a future reader will have to turn to the copyright page and calculate that ten years ago ("approximately") means 1976. But how could the administration get "additional authority . . ." in 1972? Perhaps, as I speculated above, Golovskoy set this down when he came to the US in 1981? No matter; a minor point; some reference work will tell us when Goskino was formed. Reading on, we learn that the Committee's chairman, Filip Yermash, "came to power" in 1972. Note the phrase, "came to power," either Golovskoy's own or supplied in, I assume, accurate translation (the title page indicates "Translations" by Steven Hill, a University of Illinois specialist on Soviet film and drama). The phrase is revealing, indicative of the very political character of all appointments and positions in the Soviet film industry hierarchy, and of the enormous authority the bosses have. As a political appointee, it comes as no surprise that, according to Golovskoy, Yermash "literally hates film and film makers" and regularly avoids both; in fact, many films "are released without Yermash viewing them." On the other hand, Golovskoy credits Yermash with leading a campaign for more commercial films, productions such as Vladimir Menshov's *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears,* very successful at the box office in the USSR, and something of a hit abroad as well (it won an Oscar for best foreign film in 1981). Yermash got his job because he is related to former Politburo member Alexei Kirilenko. We also learn that it takes four weeks for any director to see him, unless you are Sergei Bondarchuk or Stanislav Rostotsky, and that he has a large office on the second floor of the main Goskino building in addition to his own screening room, private bathroom, and small dining room. Ordinary employees use a cafeteria on the ground floor "and there is another dining-room for higher-level administrators." More fascinating information: the Moscow Symphony Orchestra for Motion Pictures "records in the Mosfilm studios, but rehearses in another building on Sretenka Street in an old section of Moscow."

And so it goes. If you are looking for the structure of Goskino, its various divisions, departments, and functions, you'll find it here, but you will also have to get through a great deal of trivia, gossip, digressions, and speculation, some of it useful, some not. (The reader

will have to decide, for example, how important it is to know that such-and-such is Jewish, while so-and-so is a woman; Golovskoy always points this out.) By the time you have read other chapters on the feature film studios, repertory control, cinema in the non-Russian republics, film audiences, promotion, and criticism, you will have a lively understanding of the modern Soviet film industry not as some cruelly efficient apparatus grinding out in celluloid the ideological dictates of the political hierarchy. Instead, we find complex human dynamics with cross-currents within and among various bureaucracies, conflicting attitudes and conflicting personalities, political criteria jostling with commercial ones, the ideologues battling with the entertainers, the chauvinists versus the humanists, Moscow seeing things differently from Tbilisi, and so on. You might come away with either the feeling that it is a wonder that anything gets produced at all, or that there is a surprising degree of flexibility in all of this; or both. You might understand, in short, both why, for example, the late Andrei Tarkovsky could produce only five feature films during his twenty-year career in the USSR, as well as why his highly personal, even religious art got produced and distributed.

In a general sense, as John Rimberg helpfully offers in his afterword, the Soviet film industry represents a series of compromises among the Soviet political hierarchy, the film-makers themselves, and the consuming public; each has a different form of clout and can exert it in ways that are more or less powerful in relation to the others. Rimberg, incidentally, presented this thesis originally in a Columbia University doctoral dissertation of 1959, published by Arno Press in 1973 (*The Motion Picture in the Soviet Union: 1918–1952, A Sociological Analysis*). This was a rather daring, almost "pluralist" analysis at a time when most views of the USSR, including its cinema, were commonly colored by "totalitarian" theories. Interestingly, in 1955 Rimberg collaborated with an earlier Soviet film *émigré,* Paul Babitsky, a representative of the "second wave" exodus, for the book, *The Soviet Film Industry* (New York: Praeger, 1955), a systematic study. Now, thirty years later, he has collaborated with a "third-wave" *émigré* to produce a very different kind of book on the same subject for a later period.

Golovskoy spices Rimberg's general thesis with specifics and anecdotal color. Moreover, he shows how each grouping—the political, the film-making, the moviegoing—is not a monolith but a cluster of differing tastes and philosophies. Of course, certain topics, if commonly agreed upon by the politicos, may be absolutely forbidden, no matter what the other two groups may want or be prepared to accept. I doubt that any director can make, say, an unflattering movie about Lenin. There may be some measure of "pluralism" in the USSR, but civil libertarian it is not, even under Gorbachev. But, as Golovskoy shows, the politicos may not agree. Andrei Konchalovsky was able to produce his expensive and unconventional epic, *Siberiade* (1979), because of Yermash's support. High party and government officials, however, greeted the film, says Golovskoy, "with strong disapproval." Eldar Ryasanov's brilliant and popular satire, *Garage* (1980), was banned in Moscow for three months by former local party boss Viktor Grishin . . . but Muscovites could see it in the suburbs. Former Leningrad party chief Grigory Romanov tried to kill Gleb Panfilov's *I Wish to Speak* (1975; about personal integrity), but was over-ruled when Yermash got other Politburo members to support the film. Romanov retaliated by ousting Panfilov from Leningrad and banning his next film, *Theme* (1975), dealing with the sensitive subject of Jewish emigration.

Finally, Golovskoy argues that, even during the relatively conservative decade under consideration in the book, the limits of permissiveness expanded if only because there was a shift from ideological to commercial considerations in official attitudes toward the film industry. Films can bring in huge revenues. To do this, however, to satisfy the film-going public, the heavy hand of convention has to be relaxed. Stylistic as well as thematic risks have to be broached and tolerated.

Golovskoy is pessimistic about the extent of this process, but the Gorbachev reforms should make anyone interested in Soviet cinema anything but pessimistic. Already the changes make much of Golovskoy's book an informative history of a period rather than a report on the present. Alexander Kamshalov has replaced Yermash as Goskino head. Elem Klimov has replaced Lev Kulidzhanov as chief of the

Cinematographers Union. Panfilov's *Theme* has been released. So has Alexei German's *Checkpoint* (1972), a film about the controversial subject of Red Army deserters during WWII that was banned after production—Golovskoy's appendices include an interesting Lenfilm Studio discussion of the film (under the title, *Operation 'Happy New Year'*).

The list of changes is long and continues to grow, daily. Golovskoy's book, from its unique vantage point, allows you to savor the changes all the more. *Glasnost,* keep them coming.

—LOUIS MENASHE

THE ITALIAN POLITICAL FILMMAKERS

By John J. Michalczyk. Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986. $29.50.

There is something disturbingly facile about almost anyone's attempts to "explain" Italian politics. Either the clichés get in the way, reducing Italy to Giovanni Guareschi's "little world of Don Camillo," or there is, on the contrary, an aggrandizing effort, as in Luigi Barzini's book *The Italians,* to make Italy something like a *teatrum mundi,* the stage of the world, on which Italians, with their flair for theatrics, were somehow acting out a universal complexity that belies the sheer transparency of the parochial gesture. Film scholar Michalczyk takes a modest middle road, limiting himself to a cataloguing function which enables opinions from all points of the political spectrum to be gathered between the covers of this compendium; but the result, predictably, I'm afraid, still ends up being irritatingly superficial.

Firstly, there is the matter of selection. Michalczyk chooses to focus on seven more or less contemporary film-makers: Rosi, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Bellocchio, Pontecorvo, Petri, and Wertmüller. I say "more or less contemporary" because two of the seven are no longer with us: Pasolini died back in 1975, and Petri in 1982. Granted, however, contemporariness is not the issue, and no one would dispute the importance of Pasolini and Petri in any study of Italian political film-making. What is questionable, however, are Michalczyk's inclusion of Lina Wertmüller and his exclusion of the film-making team of Paolo and Vittorio Taviani.

What is especially lamentable is that, on one had, Michalczyk gives no sign of acknowledging that Wertmüller's inclusion might appear questionable to some observers; nor does his treatment of her films show any recognition of the problematic way in which Wertmüller's films, far more commercially oriented than all the other films considered in this book (with the notable exception of several of Bertolucci's films, especially his *Last Tango in Paris*), might necessitate a different level of analysis—and a different understanding of what is and is not "political"—than the films of the other directors whom Michalczyk is studying. On the other hand, where the unexplained—and totally inexcusable—omission of the Taviani brothers' work is concerned, the reader can't help wondering if their relative lack of box-office exposure in American movie theatres isn't Michalczyk's only reason for excluding them. And *that* thought raises some big questions about Michalczyk's own politics (which seem to be left-liberal of the sort that characterizes the US Information Agency's handling of host-country political culture) as well as raising questions about Michalczyk's understanding of the politics of the movie business internationally as well as in Italy.

The problem is that Michalczyk never once addresses himself in any depth to the *theoretical* levels of what might be meant by the term "political film-making," much less "ideology." In spite of all the critical and theoretical work that has been occasioned by the difficulty of coming to grips with Godard's films from the mid-1960s to the present, Michalczyk archly dismisses as "elitist" Godard's approach and he doggedly returns to the old middlebrow approach that looks for "politics" almost exclusively in the content of a film and not in its form. Nor is there in Michalczyk's writing any effort akin to that of critics who have studied New German Cinema (Rentschler, in particular, but also Corrigan and even Sandford), who have not neglected to examine the politics of film production financing. Nor, for that matter, in spite of all the quotations from various critics that are liberally sprinkled throughout this book, is there any effort on Michalczyk's part to utilize this as raw material for an analysis along the lines of what German scholars have called "reception theory."

Put bluntly, there doesn't seem to be a theoretical bone in the body of Michalczyk's work.

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The result, inevitably, feels awfully flabby. Michalczyk's approach (much like Sandford's) is to offer a thumbnail biographical sketch of each film-maker, then to assay a few pages of thematic or stylistic generalizations about the director's work, and then to move on quickly to an enumeration of the plot and political content of each and every film by each of his chosen directors. To add spice, Michalczyk sprinkles in brief, peppery quotes from a wide variety of Italian and foreign critics representing divergent political positions. Yet, in this all too catholic approach, Michalczyk seems totally unaware that he is mirroring the very co-optation procedures which Pasolini (echoing Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse) recognized as comprising the "false tolerance" of the bourgeois capitalist media.

One example of how this "false tolerance" works to co-opt even the political films considered in this book is actually provided by Michalczyk . . . but only in a throwaway line attributed to an unidentified critic. At the end of his brief consideration of Rosi's film *Il Caso Mattei* (*The Mattei Affair,* 1972)—a remarkably creative piece of hard-hitting investigative journalism on the life and mysterious death of Italian state oil entrepreneur Enrico Mattei—Michalczyk, who puts the film down for "the recherché form which closely approximates Jean-Luc Godard's anticommercial style," adds the following closing line: "Irony of ironies, notes one critic, although *The Mattei Affair* vehemently attacks the monopolies of the oil companies, Gulf and Western had its Paramount cinema branch distribute the film in the US."

While not condoning the huge theoretical gaps in this book, we can nevertheless be grateful for certain of its achievements. The chapter on Bellocchio is especially welcome, for he is arguably the least known and least documented of the film-makers covered here. In addition, we duly note that Michalczyk seems to have personally interviewed most of the directors in question, and that in compiling different points of view for this book he seems to draw upon a wide set of acquaintances within the Italian film-making world he is studying. The frequent use of short quotes from critics, film personalities, and even from politicians and church figures, while sometimes smacking of a reader's digest approach, does make for easy, entertaining reading, and it does help to situate issues (albeit not very deeply) within the local color of Italian political culture.

If I may be permitted one final cavil—and this is admittedly a small point, but it is symptomatic of the lack of depth in this book—how can anyone, in trying to point out how Stendhal's 1839 novel *La Chartreuse de Parme* (*The Monastery of Parma*) served as an inspiration to Bertolucci's film *Prima della rivoluzione* (*Before the Revolution,* 1964), offer such a botched plot summary of Stendhal's famous novel set in Italy? To quote Michalczyk (who seems never to have read this novel that has been so influential in setting the terms of what constitutes "Italianness"), "the passionate Duchess Sanseverina, Fabrice del Dongo's aunt, is anxious for the young nephew to succeed. She pushes him toward religion, a profession he does not love any more or less than he does the chaste, devout and tender Clélia Conti." Stendhal must be turning over in his grave. But come to think of it, Stendhal would not likely have appreciated what Bertolucci did with his characters either.

—JAMES ROY MACBEAN

EXPORTING ENTERTAINMENT
America in the World Film Market, 1907-1934

By Kristin Thompson. [BFI] Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986. $24.95.

Thompson has patiently gone through a vast amount of trade papers, Commerce Department reports, and other documents to produce this meticulous account of how America's commercial "style" helped its classical film style dominate the world's screens. World Wars that disrupted European producing and distributing firms helped, of course, but the long story is one of unending merciless commercial pressure: patents, combines, oligopolistic arrangements, political deals, and a choking off of foreign attempts to penetrate the American market. Europeans fought back, notably in the "Film Europe" movement and through the control of certain sound-film patent rights, but even quotas proved an insufficient weapon. And not only in Europe but also in the Middle East and Latin America, Hollywood gained control that has never been successfully challenged.

The result, inevitably, feels awfully flabby. Michalczyk's approach (much like Sandford's) is to offer a thumbnail biographical sketch of each film-maker, then to assay a few pages of thematic or stylistic generalizations about the director's work, and then to move on quickly to an enumeration of the plot and political content of each and every film by each of his chosen directors. To add spice, Michalczyk sprinkles in brief, peppery quotes from a wide variety of Italian and foreign critics representing divergent political positions. Yet, in this all too catholic approach, Michalczyk seems totally unaware that he is mirroring the very co-optation procedures which Pasolini (echoing Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse) recognized as comprising the "false tolerance" of the bourgeois capitalist media.

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Thompson's discussion of Asia is relatively scant, though intriguing. The Japanese, who developed vertically integrated companies similar to Hollywood's, were able to control their own theaters and American films never achieved dominance. In India, after initial American silent-film penetration, the development of the unique musical film genre led to the present strong indigenous industry.

Some of Thompson's findings change common views. London, for example, was far more important as the locus of early American export activity than has been understood. And the very notion of a "national cinema" is undermined by the complex web of commercial interconnections that she documents. However, as to what a country interested in preserving something of its own culture can do against the Hollywood onslaught (if anything), she offers no counsel. By now, with the electronification of entertainment, the question may be less than academic.

—E.C.

THE AMERICAN WEST IN FILM

By Jon Tuska. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985.

He's written books on *film noir* and on Hollywood detectives, but the Western is clearly Tuska's special pleasure. This volume proceeds in the wake of *The Filming of the West* (1975), *The American West in Fiction* (ed., 1982) and *Billy the Kid: a Bio/Bibliography* (1983). As before, we encounter passing references to such as Marcus Aurelius, Homer, Epictitus and *Revelations.*

The book's central argument poses popular stereotypes and factual falsifications against historical actuality: how Lincoln paid off election favors by handing out Indian agency appointments, what really took place at the OK Corral. History, then, constructs a frame of reference against which to measure intentions (asked about misrepresenting the Earp-Clanton shootout in *My Darling Clementine,* John Ford's response is "Did you like the movie?") and accuracies ("Old friend, what would you do?" the Secretary of Interior mutters to a Lincoln portrait in *Cheyenne Autumn*).

Tuska's close readings find him in periodic confrontation with other Western studies. He is disdainful of Fenin and Everson, dismissive of Philip French, admiring toward Jean-Louis Leutrat's *Le Western,* and alternately in agreement and dispute with Jim Kitses's *Horizon's West* (a book deserving to be back in print). The Tuska approach is down to earth, suspicious of allegory, uncomfortable with dialectical antinomies, wary of notions that popular films tap "deep desires" in their mass audiences. He's scornful of any proposition that Greek myths pop up in Tombstone or Dodge City, although C. G. Jung (203) and Theodore Reik (204) are finally and somewhat surprisingly enlisted in the cause of explication.

The American West in Film follows six authorship studies with a series of biographies, including the James brothers, Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp. Among directors, the author's support veers toward Mann's and Hathaway's employments of location and interpersonal complexities as contrasted with Fordian sentimentalities and Hawksian male togetherness. Boetticher's depth of characterization is suspect. Tuska's personal friendship with Peckinpah and Peckinpah's own unpredictabilities seem to cloud an altogether consistent evaluation there.

By Tuska's measure, critical arguments that a generic form such as the Western proves interesting in terms of how the past is perceived by the present fail because they lack any standard against which differences may be gauged. As committed to American history as he is to American film, the author's strategy is to impress his reader with verified detail: Hickok's animosity toward Calamity Jane, Pat Garrett's minimal familiarity with Billy the Kid. Similarly, Tuska encourages suspicion toward popular culture studies (John Cawelti an arch-villain here), often dependent on Henry Nash Smith's thesis, which link fiction and film to widespread public sentiment. Custer as buffoon in *Little Big Man,* Billy the Kid as juvenile delinquent in *Dirty Little Billy:* these are not so much historical correctives as they are simple recastings of different moral parables. None bear much relation to the realities of western badmen, Indians, women, soldiers, ranchers, and barroom brawls. "Print the legend" is a dumb idea.

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Aldgate, Anthony, and Jeffrey Richards. *Britain Can Take It.* New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986. $24.95. From the initial closing of the cinemas to *Fires Were Started* and *Western Approaches.*

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Aldgate, Anthony, and Jeffrey Richards. *Britain Can Take It.* New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986. $24.95. From the initial closing of the cinemas to *Fires Were Started* and *Western Approaches.*

Thompson's discussion of Asia is relatively scant, though intriguing. The Japanese, who developed vertically integrated companies similar to Hollywood's, were able to control their own theaters and American films never achieved dominance. In India, after initial American silent-film penetration, the development of the unique musical film genre led to the present strong indigenous industry.

Some of Thompson's findings change common views. London, for example, was far more important as the locus of early American export activity than has been understood. And the very notion of a "national cinema" is undermined by the complex web of commercial interconnections that she documents. However, as to what a country interested in preserving something of its own culture can do against the Hollywood onslaught (if anything), she offers no counsel. By now, with the electronification of entertainment, the question may be less than academic.

—E.C.

THE AMERICAN WEST IN FILM

By Jon Tuska. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985.

He's written books on *film noir* and on Hollywood detectives, but the Western is clearly Tuska's special pleasure. This volume proceeds in the wake of *The Filming of the West* (1975), *The American West in Fiction* (ed., 1982) and *Billy the Kid: a Bio/Bibliography* (1983). As before, we encounter passing references to such as Marcus Aurelius, Homer, Epictitus and *Revelations.*

The book's central argument poses popular stereotypes and factual falsifications against historical actuality: how Lincoln paid off election favors by handing out Indian agency appointments, what really took place at the OK Corral. History, then, constructs a frame of reference against which to measure intentions (asked about misrepresenting the Earp-Clanton shootout in *My Darling Clementine,* John Ford's response is "Did you like the movie?") and accuracies ("Old friend, what would you do?" the Secretary of Interior mutters to a Lincoln portrait in *Cheyenne Autumn*).

Tuska's close readings find him in periodic confrontation with other Western studies. He is disdainful of Fenin and Everson, dismissive of Philip French, admiring toward Jean-Louis Leutrat's *Le Western,* and alternately in agreement and dispute with Jim Kitses's *Horizon's West* (a book deserving to be back in print). The Tuska approach is down to earth, suspicious of allegory, uncomfortable with dialectical antinomies, wary of notions that popular films tap "deep desires" in their mass audiences. He's scornful of any proposition that Greek myths pop up in Tombstone or Dodge City, although C. G. Jung (203) and Theodore Reik (204) are finally and somewhat surprisingly enlisted in the cause of explication.

The American West in Film follows six authorship studies with a series of biographies, including the James brothers, Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp. Among directors, the author's support veers toward Mann's and Hathaway's employments of location and interpersonal complexities as contrasted with Fordian sentimentalities and Hawksian male togetherness. Boetticher's depth of characterization is suspect. Tuska's personal friendship with Peckinpah and Peckinpah's own unpredictabilities seem to cloud an altogether consistent evaluation there.

By Tuska's measure, critical arguments that a generic form such as the Western proves interesting in terms of how the past is perceived by the present fail because they lack any standard against which differences may be gauged. As committed to American history as he is to American film, the author's strategy is to impress his reader with verified detail: Hickok's animosity toward Calamity Jane, Pat Garrett's minimal familiarity with Billy the Kid. Similarly, Tuska encourages suspicion toward popular culture studies (John Cawelti an arch-villain here), often dependent on Henry Nash Smith's thesis, which link fiction and film to widespread public sentiment. Custer as buffoon in *Little Big Man,* Billy the Kid as juvenile delinquent in *Dirty Little Billy:* these are not so much historical correctives as they are simple recastings of different moral parables. None bear much relation to the realities of western badmen, Indians, women, soldiers, ranchers, and barroom brawls. "Print the legend" is a dumb idea.

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Annan, David. Cinema of Mystery and Fantasy. New York: Crossroad/Ungar/Continuum, 1985. $8.95 paper. This slim volume attempts to cover the entire realm of mystery, horror, and fantasy films from their foundings in ancient mythology to Lucas's *Star Wars* in less than 150 pages—most of which are photos. Annan's digressions are annoying, and the text is wandering, unfocused, and unsubstantial. He devotes precious text space to digressions on French post cards, the development of motion pictures, and irrelevant films such as *Seven Samurai* and *The Bicyle Thief.* He attempts to cover up this deficiency in substance by making sweeping statements and offers no new facts, theories, or insights.

—BEVERLEY BARE BUEHRER

Bergan, Ronald. *The United Artists Story.* New York: Crown, 1986. $35.00. A film-by-film account of the studio's output from the beginnings, with mostly caustic critical comments and lots of pictures. —E.C.

Dixon, Wheeler, ed. *Producers Releasing Corporation: A Comprehensive Filmography and History.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1986. First history of the third "poverty row" studio (along with Monogram and Republic), haunt of Edgar G. Ulmer and Sam Newfield, masters of the "cheap but interesting."

Fell, John L., et al. *Before Hollywood: Turn-of-the-Century American Film.* New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1987. $35.00. Catalogue of an American Federation of Arts exhibition: lots of archival photographs and frame enlargements, essays by scholars (Leyda, Koszarski, Fell, Musser, Mayne, et al.) and capsule comments on a variety of films.

Friedrich, Otto. *City of Nets.* New York: Harper and Row, 1986. $25.00. This "Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940's" is like a TV special made out of stock shots. You've seen them before, if not in this particular sequence. Many have been done to death: Dalton Trumbo yelling at J. Parnell Thomas, Louis B. Mayer on his knees. Some are downright interesting: Bertolt Brecht slipping away from HUAC questions with evasions and lies. Some are great: Stravinsky agreeing to write an elephant dance for Balanchine because the elephants are small. Maybe *City of Nets* was developed in a computer. A huge quantity of anecdotes, jokes, and newspaper history has been culled out of other sources (including about five hundred books), artfully reconstructed, and arranged as to topic. They're threaded into narrative sequence so that the juxtapositions collide or collude. Among the old chestnuts, featured players are spotted including Reagan, Hughes, Welles, Chaplin and various members of the displaced European community. We know how everyone turns out, although most of their stories aren't finished when the book ends. Introductory epigraphs set a tone: corruption, conspiracy, collapse. It's Nathaniel West's Hollywood (and Ben Hecht's and Raymond Chandler's), a place of infinitely vulgar malevolence, but Friedrich's film clips are easy on the voiceover. He's more show than tell.

—JOHN FELL

Kerr, Paul, ed. *The Hollywood Film Industry.* (British Film Institute Readers in Film Studies.) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. US Distributor: Methuen. $13.95, paper. The gathering of a series of essays on the Hollywood studio system for the BFI's rigorous series of "Readers" set editor Paul Kerr nearly unsolvable challenges. Serious research on financing, production and exhibition of the American cinema is the most rapidly advancing area of film studies—and the one with the shortest history. As Kerr recognized, the usual BFI assembly of the best work done on the topic over several decades would only have stressed the sad "redundancy" of pre-seventies theory. Thus the oldest of the twelve essays here is Edward Buscombe's 1975 *Screen* piece on the relationship of finances to ideology at Columbia in the 1930s. It's a superb and suggestive essay, a model of its kind, and yet also a demonstration of how little can finally be said about such questions without access to studio records. Generally, Kerr's choices are dictated by a useful double aim—to display promising academic methodologies for industry research alongside finished conclusions (Lee Beaupré's informative *Variety*-esque article on distribution strategies is plucked from another universe). If the first goal sometimes overshadows the second (e.g., Edward Branigan on color), it makes this anthology of enduring interest even when individual conclusions have been superceded. Indeed, this most up-to-date of the BFI Readers already seems the oldest. A few of the articles are rendered obsolete by their own author's books (David Bordwell on early-sound-era camera movement; Janet Wasko on Griffith's financing), but other articles are neat sidelights to such books (Janet Staiger on continuity-script standardization in the years before *The Classical Hollywood Cinema;* Douglas Gomery on the economic viability of grandiose "picture palaces" in the early years of *The Hollywood Studio System*). Kerr's introductions flaunt some overreactions (a denial that US film "art" and "commerce" conflict; an assumption that industry research is "ammunition" against auteurism, not complementary to it), but his collection finds a key niche between the theory and practice of industry scholarship. Harder-boiled collections of such essays have been assembled by Gorham Kindem in *The American Movie Industry* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1982) and Tino Balio in *The American Film Industry* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). —SCOTT SIMMON

Landy, Marcia. *Fascism in Film: The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1931-1943.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986. Marcia Landy considers some 70 films of the Fascist era ideologically, revealing that Italian cinema countered current ideology about as much as it propagated it, that costume spectacles and "white telephone" movies were less common than contemporary subjects about ordinary people (yet seldom merely escapist even so), and that Visconti's *Ossessione* was less a break with the past than a culmination of a series of melodramas in which, particularly after 1938, social tensions were self-consciously exposed. Film historians, take note! Landy can be astute and insightful on specific films. But her

1980-ish, slightly Marxist attitudes sometimes obstruct an understanding of the needs and emotions that animated 1930s Italians. She uses "fascist" vaguely, always with a small f, with denotation varying from Mussolini to Hitler to the bourgeoisie to anything restrictive, and her Fascist "ideology" is hard to distinguish from Hollywood's. More about Italian culture and less about narrative theory, with an historical rather than a generic approach, would have helped. But Landy's elitist rhetoric (e.g., "the excess of negative effect generated by the narrative") would restrict her readership in any case. —TAG GALLAGHER

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Mast, Gerald. *A Short History of the Movies.* 4th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1986. $29.95. This is a considerably revised edition, reflecting a somewhat more social-economic-ideological positioning of the art, although it's still basically auteurist in approach. Mast has added a chapter on the Hollywood transition between the old studio structure and the more independent production system of the 1950s, and gives more attention to Cukor, Fuller, Ray, and Sirk. More coverage is also provided for films from Australia, Germany, and Japan, and inevitably spotty accounts are also given to Third World Cinema. (Curiously, although the Quebec cinema is much livelier than the Anglo-Canadian, it gets no attention at all.) A terminal "Look of the Future" section, assessing the impact of TV and videocassettes, takes comfort that even the horse is not altogether obsolete (there's always the Kentucky Derby) and that "For the urban 'gentry,' movies are [still] as essential as quiche, boutiques, and subscriptions to the symphony." This sounds to me like whistling in the darkened theater after the projector lights have gone out. But, as Mast properly points out, nobody can yet really discern the next stage of the co-evolution of film and electronics. —E.C.

Neale, Steve. *Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour.* London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985. $6.95. A review of the history of film technology, situating it within aesthetic, ideological and economic contexts. The focus is on general effects, rather than the minuter attention to lighting, camera usage, etc. which has recently been carried out by Salt, Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, and others. —E.C.

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Reference Works

FILM REVIEW INDEX
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dered are sensible. The volumes are certainly worthy of widespread library purchase, and will serve to bolster critical memories as well as provide reference facts. The selection of films (Vol. 8 indexes them by directors, titles, screenwriters, cinematographers, editors, art directors, music, performers, and subjects) is generously mainstream. —E.C.

THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY
A Historical Dictionary

By Anthony Slide. Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, 1986. $49.95.

Although its entries are mostly brief, a few hundred words, this 400-page volume is densely packed with carefully researched information —much of it not easily available (if at all) to people distant from major research libraries. Here you can learn (taking a few random instances) about Inspiration Pictures, Inc., extant from 1921 to 1931, where Richard Barthelmess, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, and Henry King worked; about ill-starred enterprises such as Electronovision; about the operations and history of the National Screen Service; about the use of "lobby cards." There are longer entries on major studios, Red-hunting in Hollywood, Florida as a production center, copyright, film sound, child labor laws, the star system, block booking, and for once a mercifully accurate and concise entry on the zoom lens (by John Belton). While these longer entries cannot, of course, encompass all the details of their subjects, they are balanced, succinct, and surprisingly comprehensive. The volume as a whole, thus, will be of great service to students looking for quick guidance on a wide range of historical matters, a convenient reference for writers and teachers, and a delight to browse in for anybody interested in the history of the art. —E.C.

KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES!

By Bill Warren. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 1986. $39.95.

The first volume of *Keep Watching the Skies!* (1982) covered, in depth, virtually every science fiction movie theatrically released in the United States between 1950 and 1957. In that "*intensely* personal" book, Bill Warren did more than cover each film: he accurately summarized it, vividly evoked it, and even brought back the experience of watching it. With superb critical judgment, he pointed out just what was, in his words, "good and bad" about each of the films. He listed the original double features, and the films in order of release. He and his research associate, Bill Thomas, knew how much those things mattered. And he always found a way to "explain my liking for a particular film."

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treatment: a plot summary, career surveys of actors and other key film-makers, excerpts from contemporary reviews and later criticism, and Warren's own sincere, long-meditated, and well-informed summary critical judgment. He also puts the song in its 1950s context, criticizes the plodding direction, eloquently praises McQueen's performance, and *understands* how ambitious and well-observed the script was and what a rare difference it made that this film was not produced in Hollywood. He goes on to say what any true lover of *The Blob* can rejoice at seeing in print: that "Jane's kid brother is one of the most unpleasant child actors of all time," that the Blob obviously engulfs a *painting* of a diner, and that Aneta Corseaut plays Jane even if "in all reference sources, including official Paramount credits, she's listed as 'Judy.'" Then he tracks down the double bill the Blob so insinuatingly disrupted and finds that "*Daughter of Horror* . . . is a real movie, and the sequence on the screen is actually from it."

But it is when he covers the less well-known films, like *The Cosmic Monster,* that Warren is at his best. These are the films I am grateful to him for recalling, the ones whose names I couldn't be sure of and which nobody I now know has ever seen. This is a book with which to engage one's memories—and even to revive and be renewed by the critic one was as a child—thanks to Warren's extraordinary ability to tap and release, in the reader's memory, intense and comprehensive memory-impressions. He knows exactly which scenes to describe, which effects to evoke, in order to yank us, Proust-like, into the past of our first (and probably only) viewing of these films; and again as in Proust, the mature critic, along for the ride, is obliterated into a virtually timeless state of pure appreciation.

I also recall silhouettes of giant centipedes—a particular phobia of mine—crawling up a window, and some kind of nasty creature devouring parts of a person's face; the heroine becomes entangled in a giant spider web. . . . There was, by those in the audience, a willing, even grateful suspension of disbelief. We *wanted* these films to be memorable, and partly because they occasionally did achieve a riveting image, but mostly because of that desire by us for something exciting and full of wonder, memories became powerfully etched in our minds. For those of us who grew up in the 1950s, this kind of engraved, astonishing imagery usually came from science fiction films. . . . In watching these films again, we are not attempting to relive our childhoods—few really would want to do that—we are trying to recapture the uncritical, receptive reactions we had at that age.

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—DON WILLIS

Ellis, Jack C. *John Grierson: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986. $55.00. Grierson was a poet despite himself, a poet of a coherently interrelated world; the beauty of well-worn work movements and of machines forced itself through the cracks of his Scots socialist rigor. And he was a tireless instigator—of the documentary movement, of films, and of the National Film Board. Ellis's biographical and critical essays give a sharp sense of the paradoxes of Grierson's life and work.
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Everson, William K. *More Classics of the Horror Film.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1986. $19.95. Archivist extraordinaire William K. Everson's latest book is divided into six sections, the most intriguing of which are the brief, tantalizing "Rediscoveries" (which includes a fascinating account of the long-thought-lost 1931 Spanish *Dracula*); the perhaps surprising, but perfectly logical "Horror in the Non-Horror Film" (which documents a filmic phenomenon more common than one might think); and "Schlock Horror of the Thirties and Forties" (in which we meet again "old friends" like *The Corpse Vanishes* and *The Mad Ghoul*). The combination reference-work/picture-book format yields a Slide Show effect: new slide (i.e., still), new spiel (i.e., paragraph). At the end, the slides win out—there is no index whatsoever, simply a grab-bag selection of photographs. But if Everson seems, sometimes, in the text, a little *too* friendly to some of the ghastlier examples of schlock (e.g., *The Invisible Ghost, The Apeman*), said text is studded with insights, asides, and little-known facts and factlets, gleaned from a lifetime of horror-movie-going. —DON WILLIS

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Gifford, Denis. *The British Film Catalogue, 1895-1985.* New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1987. $75.00. An updated revision of the 1973 (and out-of-print) original, containing 1,500 new entries: every film made for entertainment since the absolute beginnings, so far as the author can tell. Credits and very brief synopses—for *This Sporting Life:* "DRAMA. Yorkshire miner becomes professional rugby footballer and fails to win love of widowed landlady." Separate index for Part II (after 1970). —E.C.

Hilger, Michael. *The American Indian in Film.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986. $18.50. Plot summaries of 800 films, from the beginnings to date, but without either anthropological or historical commentary or title index; there *is* a bibliography, however. —E.C.

Langman, Larry. *Writers on the American Screen; A Guide to Film Adaptations of American and Foreign Literary Works.* New York: Garland, 1986. $30.00. Cross index to authors and works made into films.

Maltin, Leonard, ed. *Leonard Maltin's TV Movies and Video Guide, 1987 ed.* New York: New American Library, 1986. $4.95 paper. Even more astoundingly plump than before (now 17,000 films in 1121 pages) Maltin's *Guide* now indicates which titles are available (as of Summer 1986) in video. The introduction aims heavy blows at colorization and other manglings of films for TV—and also praises those dedicated few who have seized the occasion to purvey video versions restoring studio cuts, full credit sequences, etc. Beware: new alphabetization system is used. —E.C.

Musser, Charles, et al., eds. *Thomas A. Edison Papers, A Guide to Motion Picture Catalogs by American Producers and Distributors, 1894-1908: A Microfilm Edition.* Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1985. A 50-page printed introduction is available.

Okuda, Ted, with Edward Watz. *The Columbia Comedy Shorts: Two-Reel Hollywood Film Comedies, 1933-1958.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1986. $29.95. As the authors acknowledge in the preface, roughly half their book covers ground which other books—Leonard Maltin's *Selected Short Subjects* principal among them—have already covered. The other half, however, is based on honest spadework—interviews, archival research, viewings of the films themselves. And the overlapping with previous works is, in a sense, appropriate to the subject: Hollywood comedy shorts were often reworked, remade, reused. Included: studio history, filmographies, biographies, index, bibliography. Keaton and Langdon worked at Columbia in the post-Golden Age of Comedy, but the headliners of the shorts then and there were, of course, The Three Stooges. One of the secrets of the latter's success, or longevity, appears to have been the fact that they never asked for a raise, or at least were never granted one by Harry Cohn. —DON WILLIS

Pitts, Michael R. *Western Movies: A TV and Video Guide to 4200 Genre Films.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1986. $39.95. Pitts estimates that this "most popular and enduring" genre turned out some 20,000 films; he covers 4,189 of them, all available on TV, 16mm, 8mm (or Super 8), videocassettes, or videodiscs. Director and scriptwriter credits, cast lists, 30-word synopses with a few words of evaluation. —E.C.

Quinlan, David. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Movie Character Actors.* New York: Harmony Books, 1986. $14.95. Capsule characterizations, pix, credits for 850 names.

_____. *Quinlan's Illustrated Directory of Film Stars* (rev. ed.). New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986. $45.00. Over 300 new entries—brief sketches followed by lists of films.

Rimmer, Robert H. *The X-Rated Videotape Guide, Revised and Updated.* New York: Harmony Books, 1986. $16.95 paper. Ratings and synopses of 600 films—shorter for "classics"—plus sometimes weird though well-meant commentary by the author of *The Harrod Experiment.* (He assumes women cannot operate videorecorders and cameras, for instance.) Occasional comments on style—Rimmer recognizes the cinematic virtuosity of the lesbian sequence in *High Rise*—and on the gradual appearance of films less oriented toward older-males tastes. —E.C.

Samples, Gordon. *The Drama Scholars' Index to Plays and Filmscripts: A Guide to Plays and Filmscripts in Selected Anthologies, Series, and Periodicals, Vol. 3.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1986. $35.00.

Singer, Michael, ed. *Film Directors: A Complete Guide.* Beverly Hills, CA: Lone Eagle Publishing, 1986. Interviews with seven new directors, plus listings of credits for hundreds of living directors. No competition for the wealth of on-line industry information in the BaseLine system, but a handy printed reference. —E.C.

Speed, F. Maurice. *Film Review, 1985-6.* Topsfield, MA: Salem House, 1986. $14.95 paper. Synopses, credits, photos on theatrical releases, briefer notes on TV features.

Vinson, James. *The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers: Volume III, Actors and Actresses.* Chicago: St. James Press, 1986. $50.00. Biographical notes, credits, bibliographies, and critical sketches for some 750 performers. A thoroughly researched and sensibly written reference work which belongs, together with Vols. I and II in this series, on all library shelves. —E.C.

Warner, Alan. *Who Sang What on the Screen.* Angus & Robertson (Unit 4, Eden Park, 31 Waterloo Road, North Ryde, NSW, Australia), 1986. $11.95. Where those favorites came from; illustrations.

Welsh, James Michael. *Peter Watkins: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1986. $45.00. *The War Game* was so horrifying a portrayal of the social chaos after nuclear war that the BBC refused to show it for 20 years. (Like *The Day After,* we now know, it vastly understated the catastrophic effects of nuclear winter.) It is the most politically controversial film ever made in England, and with it Watkins entered a career of making films that troubled establishments everywhere. Good biographical and critical sketches. —E.C.

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Wexman, Virginia Wright, ed., with Karen Hollinger. *Letter from an Unknown Woman.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986. $26.00 cloth, $12.00 paper. Introductory essay, biographical essay, and the script (by Howard Koch, based on a novella by Stefan Zweig).

Technical Works

Blank, Ben, and Mario R. Garcia. *Professional Video Graphic Design: The Art and Technology.* New York: Prentice Hall, 1986. $29.95. Hands-on iconography, typography, doctoring photographs, preparing maps, etc.

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Theory

FILM FEMINISTS
Theory and Practice

By Mary C. Gentile. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. $27.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

This book, published by a small press in a series of women's studies books, deserves wider attention than it has gotten from film people. Gentile begins from a basis in Lacan and Althusser, but quickly and gracefully moves through a consideration of traditional film theories (Eisenstein and Bazin) to attempt a feminist film aesthetics which is not "separatist": a doctrine she calls Critical Subjectivity, operating both within films and in the relationships between films and viewers. She outlines this sophisticated awareness of contradictions and of multiple identification and perspectives in a clear, personal, and direct style which (very rare among current critics of any persuasion) aims directly at influencing film-making practice; it's critical intelligence asking to be taken seriously by a wide and mixed audience. In the second half of the book, Gentile applies her general approach in specific studies of *Women* (Mezsaros), *Redupers* (Sanders), *Film About a Woman Who . . .* (Rainer), and *A Question of Silence* (Gorris). Her analyses of these very different films prove enriching rather than narrowing; they're both theoretically sophisticated and sympathetically sensitive to the complexity of film effects. —E.C.

THE POWER OF THE IMAGE
Essays on Representation and Sexuality

By Annette Kuhn. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper.

Only about half of this collection of essays is directly concerned with film, but Kuhn's formulations of aesthetic and psychoanalytic issues are quite general, and will interest any filmgoer concerned with pornography, the complex interactions of social and emotional pressures in representation, and the psychological roots of film effects. Thus Kuhn offers an essay on films in which cross-dressing occurs—or more precisely, she very intelligently and carefully proposes an analytical scheme which could be used for the study of such films, though she only gives (cursory) mention to a few actual scenes. She also gives an intriguing analysis of the possibility that the supposed obscurity of *The Big Sleep* signals the operation of repressive censorship mechanisms which were partly institutional (the Code) but also more personal to the producers: as means of controlling female sexuality

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Only about half of this collection of essays is directly concerned with film, but Kuhn's formulations of aesthetic and psychoanalytic issues are quite general, and will interest any filmgoer concerned with pornography, the complex interactions of social and emotional pressures in representation, and the psychological roots of film effects. Thus Kuhn offers an essay on films in which cross-dressing occurs—or more precisely, she very intelligently and carefully proposes an analytical scheme which could be used for the study of such films, though she only gives (cursory) mention to a few actual scenes. She also gives an intriguing analysis of the possibility that the supposed obscurity of *The Big Sleep* signals the operation of repressive censorship mechanisms which were partly institutional (the Code) but also more personal to the producers: as means of controlling female sexuality

Focal Press, 1986. $34.95. The director's four earlier small books (on screen writing, directing, acting, and editing) have now been combined into one 534-page volume. The result is a clear, cogent, and orderly exposition of the classical Hollywood style—with a great wealth of examples drawn from Dmytryk's own films as well as the work of others. Since the material is presented from the creator's point of view it has an urgency and ingenuity which sets it apart from most film-making texts, and should guarantee it a long life of great usefulness in film schools—although, of course, it has no theoretical or ideological perspective. —E.C.

Erens, Patricia with Marian Henley, eds. *College Course Files* [University Film and Video Association Monograph #5; available via Journal of Film and Video, Rosary College, 7900 West Division Street, River Forest, IL 60305], 1986. A collection of materials originally published in the *AFI Education Newsletter* and later in the *Journal of Film and Video* from 1979 to 1985. A wealth of course approaches are described here—not as templates to follow, but as well worked out suggestions, complete with readings. —E.C.

Kindem, Gorham. *The Moving Image: Production Principles and Practices.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1986. $24.95. Elementary text.

Phillips, William H. *Analyzing Films: A Practical Guide.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985. Introduction to film appreciation, with case studies of eight classics.

Rosen, Philip. *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. $45.00 cloth; $14.50 paper. Like Bill Nichols's *Movies & Methods, Vol. II,* this collection assembles outstanding essays from the past decade, with an occasional item (Metz, Wollen, *Cahiers* on *Young Mr. Lincoln*) going back a bit further. Rosen has added an intelligent introduction, and organized the sections sensibly. There is little overlap with either Nichols volume; adding Rosen's 550 pages to Nichols's 630 pages for Vol. I and 725 for Vol. II, plus the contemporary material in Mast & Cohen, means that classes now have easy access to more than two thousand pages of contemporary film thought. —E.C.

Theory

FILM FEMINISTS
Theory and Practice

By Mary C. Gentile. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. $27.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

This book, published by a small press in a series of women's studies books, deserves wider attention than it has gotten from film people. Gentile begins from a basis in Lacan and Althusser, but quickly and gracefully moves through a consideration of traditional film theories (Eisenstein and Bazin) to attempt a feminist film aesthetics which is not "separatist": a doctrine she calls Critical Subjectivity, operating both within films and in the relationships between films and viewers. She outlines this sophisticated awareness of contradictions and of multiple identification and perspectives in a clear, personal, and direct style which (very rare among current critics of any persuasion) aims directly at influencing film-making practice; it's critical intelligence asking to be taken seriously by a wide and mixed audience. In the second half of the book, Gentile applies her general approach in specific studies of *Women* (Mezsaros), *Redupers* (Sanders), *Film About a Woman Who . . .* (Rainer), and *A Question of Silence* (Gorris). Her analyses of these very different films prove enriching rather than narrowing; they're both theoretically sophisticated and sympathetically sensitive to the complexity of film effects. —E.C.

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NARRATION IN LIGHT
Studies in Cinematic Point of View

By George M. Wilson. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. $22.50.

That cinema should be the subject of organized intellectual study is a relatively recent idea, with its postwar growth much indebted to the seminal writings of André Bazin. In the twenty-five years through which Film Studies has struggled to become a respectable academic discipline, many Americans in this field have continued to take their cues from the French, from Christian Metz and his disciples, from Roland Barthes, and from the British journal *Screen,* which enthusiastically embraced French film theory of the 1970s, following its trajectory through various dominant conceptual schemes, from semiotics to neo-Marxism to psychoanalysis. Through this period of development a dissenting fringe of American philosophers fascinated by film—Stanley Cavell, George Linden, Noël Carroll, Allen Casebier and others—has produced a series of writings different from or opposed to what has become the predominant voice in American film theory. They have no common "philosopher's film theory." Considerable divergence exists within the group, yet they tend to agree in rejecting the language and the fashions that have flowed from Paris since Bazin died and in believing that clarity and insight in our thought about cinema can best be achieved through careful film analysis, logical thought, and lucid writing in standard English.

The latest major work on film from an American philosopher is George Wilson's *Narration in Light,* a perceptive study which combines the examination of several theoretical issues about film narrative and narration with original interpretation and analysis of half a dozen classical American narrative films. The interpretive essays are not illustrations or applications of a preconceived theory. Rather, having done interpretive studies, Wilson was then led to draw out the theory implicit in them. Hence the theory in *Narration in Light* is sketchy and suggestive rather than fully developed and the critical essays are independent enough to be of interest to readers who have no concern about theory.

Wilson writes, "Every film necessarily controls and limits the character of visual access that we have to its fictional events." His central theoretical concern is with point of view or perspective, "the different ways in which a form of narration can systematically structure an audience's overall epistemic access to narrative." He identifies three dimensions of the spectator's relationship to film narrative: *Epistemic distance* from the audience's "usual habits of perception and common sense beliefs (a question of "what features of our shared common-sense picture of the world are or are not projectible" upon the narrative world of a given film), the *epistemic reliability* of a film narration (a question of what inferences can be reliably drawn from the information directly presented in a film) and the *epistemic authority* of the film narration (a question of the relation of the spectator's knowledge of dramatic issues in the film to the knowledge accessible to the characters in the film). These dimensions then serve as a framework for the exploration of a number of theoretical issues and concepts which arise from the examination of specific films. Thus the pattern for most of the book is the alternation of a chapter analyzing a classical film and a chapter unpacking the theoretical implications of this analysis.

Thus Chapter II demonstrates how Fritz Lang's *You Only Live Once* has a structural and stylistic complexity which, if apprehended, undermines the standard interpretation of the film as Lang's American equivalent of *Destiny.* Wilson shows that the narration of *You Only Live Once* is systematically unreliable in a way which precludes the standard acceptance of Eddie Taylor's innocence and the "maudlin" redemptive ending as valid interpretations and

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makes the film's narration essentially ambiguous. Then Chapter III analyzes the concept of "classical film," mostly in terms of the "bedrock" properties of explanatory coherence and transparency, the cinematic basis of the normal audience "impression of looking into a solid and autonomous world" which will display to them all of the information necesssary to make sense of the events observed. Here, too, Wilson develops the interesting notion of "rhetorical figures of narrational instruction." In films such as *You Only Live Once* and *The Searchers,* his other example here, where a complex narrative may be misunderstood through lack of attention to significant forms or details, the film may contain scenes or forms designed to show us how the film as a whole is to be understood. Thus in *You Only Live Once* two different scenes open with images which invite misperception, only to have this temptation corrected by a cut to a wider perspective. Wilson writes, "In such a scene or shot or limited series of shots the primary function of the local narration is to establish a stressed configuration of audio-visual elements which adumbrates features of the way in which the global narration is to be read. It provides instruction in the forms of perceptual intelligibility that the film proposes and flags the segments where the realization of these forms principally occurs." (p. 49). Such a figure may function in a complex film to make the audience aware of a "set of variables which forms an explanatory counter structure correcting the superficial lack of closure in the plot."

In subsequent chapters Wilson offers extensive and persuasive interpretations of Hitchcock's *North by Northwest,* Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman,* von Sternberg's *The Devil is a Woman* and Nicholas Ray's *Rebel without a Cause,* as well as shorter discussions of *The Scarlet Empress, The Rules of the Game, To Have and Have Not.* These analyses are all, I believe, generally accurate in their descriptions and insightful and provocative in their suggestions of how these films are best to be understood, suggestions whose validity can itself be convincingly tested only by a new viewing of the films in question. In the theoretical essays which arise from these critical studies *Narration in Light* investigates such topics as the possibility of "nonomniscience" or restricted narrational authority (over a range from restriction of the audience to a character's point of view to the "unsubjectivized" yet restricted perspective of *The Rules of the Game*), narrators and narration (arguing against the contention that every film must have a narrator and showing that the over-simple categories of first person versus third person or subjective/objective are quite inadequate for revealing the complexity and subtlety of many classical films). In contrast to the idea of a narrator, Wilson develops the concepts of "reflected subjectivity" and that of a character within a film who stands as a representative or embodiment of the director, with the work of von Sternberg supplying the principal examples here. Though Wilson acknowledges his theoretical suggestions to be tentative, he has provided useful concepts for identifying the point-of-view strategies of complex films and shown that these concepts are fruitful as critical tools. The range of topics broached and the depth of the insights achieved in understanding the films discussed support Wilson's claims of the importance of "point of view" as a point of departure for film study. One criticism that may arise regards Wilson's relative neglect of sound as a major factor in determining the audience's point of view in many films. Though his critical discussions often refer to dialogue, his theoretical writings almost invariably cite visual forms of perspective. But perhaps his title *Narration in Light* indicates a deliberate choice for this occasion rather than a theoretical bias against the significance of sound in cinema. As both theory and criticism his achievement in this book is substantial and important.

That work of theory and criticism embodies, of course, the main purpose of his book. But a secondary purpose also seems apparent throughout: to demonstrate that illuminating writing on film can be accomplished without recourse to the jargon or the mythologies that pervade so much of Anglo-American-French film theory. Early in *Narration in Light* Wilson notes the "silliness" of some of the doctrines espoused by writers influenced by "Marxist or psychoanalytic versions of semiotics" and his final chapter "Morals for Method" is devoted largely to criticism of some poststructural discussions of classical American film. Hence to complain, as some will, that Wilson ignores the contributions of linguistics, psychoanalysis, and ideological studies to film theory is to miss the point, which

is, to put it bluntly, that these current fashions have not contributed to, but impeded our progress toward a clear and defensible understanding of film. And for this reader, at least, it has been a pleasure to read a book of film theory in which such terms as diegetic, code, signifier, enunciate, inscribe, demystify, bourgeois illusionism, never appear.

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Miscellaneous

REEL POWER
The Struggle for Influence and Success in the New Hollywood

By Mark Litwak. New York: Morrow, 1986. $18.95.

If you have the feeling that Hollywood pictures have lost whatever it was exactly that they once had, Litwak has a compact explanation (bolstered by endless detailed gossip):

Agents have become powerful because studio executives have become weak. Executives today exercise little power over top filmmakers and stars, and their hold on their own jobs is tenuous. The old moguls could wield great authority because they owned the studios they ran. Today's executives are hired hands who can be easily dismissed. Consequently, they are not inclined to take risks. Their primary concern is with maintaining short-term profits and making deals with proven talent for "surefire" formula pictures.

Litwak did 200 interviews to survey the whole industry scene—agents, packagers, writers, directors, producers, performers, and the distribution people—and while undoubtedly noble folks surface from time to time, the predominant theme is Stirling Silliphant's: "It's barracuda time." As Litwak notes, the book will be useful to people hoping to make it in the industry. The villainy it depicts is in some ways entertaining. The prospects it suggests for the art are dim. —E.C.

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Deleuze, Gilles. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, trans. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. This volume was reviewed (from the original French) by Dana Polan in *FQ,* Fall 1974.

Eisenstein, Sergei. *On the Composition of the Short Fiction Scenario,* tr. by Alan Y. Upchurch. New York: Ungar, 1986. $7.95 paper. Originating in lectures given shortly after the Nazi invasion in 1941, this 50-page text shows the old master analyzing the evolution of a script that finally became Pudovkin's *The Feast at Zhirmunka.* —E.C.

MacCabe, Colin. *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $27.50 cloth, $11.95 paper. A collection of essays, deriving from a seminar in popular culture, by MacCabe, Laura Kipnis, Tania Modleski, Simon Frith, Douglas Gomery, Laura Mulvey, Jane Feuer, Gillian Skirrow, Andrew Tolson, and John Caughie.

Miscellaneous

REEL POWER
The Struggle for Influence and Success in the New Hollywood

By Mark Litwak. New York: Morrow, 1986. $18.95.

If you have the feeling that Hollywood pictures have lost whatever it was exactly that they once had, Litwak has a compact explanation (bolstered by endless detailed gossip):

Agents have become powerful because studio executives have become weak. Executives today exercise little power over top filmmakers and stars, and their hold on their own jobs is tenuous. The old moguls could wield great authority because they owned the studios they ran. Today's executives are hired hands who can be easily dismissed. Consequently, they are not inclined to take risks. Their primary concern is with maintaining short-term profits and making deals with proven talent for "surefire" formula pictures.

Litwak did 200 interviews to survey the whole industry scene—agents, packagers, writers, directors, producers, performers, and the distribution people—and while undoubtedly noble folks surface from time to time, the predominant theme is Stirling Silliphant's: "It's barracuda time." As Litwak notes, the book will be useful to people hoping to make it in the industry. The villainy it depicts is in some ways entertaining. The prospects it suggests for the art are dim. —E.C.

Albrecht, Donald. *Designing Dreams: Modern Architecture in the Movies.* New York: Harper & Row, 1986. $29.95 cloth, $15.95 paper. During the 1920s and 1930s movie sets reflected then current trends in architecture with some ingenuity and talent, mannered as the results (copiously illustrated here) may now seem. *The Fountainhead,* in 1949, which caricatured Frank Lloyd Wright's work, was the last gasp. Intelligent commentary on both designs and films. —E.C.

Austin, Bruce A., ed. *Current Research in Film: Audiences, Economics, and Law.* Vol. 2. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1986. $37.50. See review of Vol. 1 in *FQ,* Spring 1987.

Bego, Mark, ed. *The Best of Modern Screen.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $12.95 paper. A selection of articles, 1930–1960, reproduced from the original pages.

Betrock, Alan. *The I Was a Teenage Juvenile Delinquent Rock 'n' Roll Horror Beach Party Movie Book: A Complete Guide to the Teen Exploitation Film: 1954–1969.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $12.95 paper. Credits, nostalgic (and judicious) critical notes, exhibitors' often contrite reports. —E.C.

Broughton, Irv. *Producers on Producing.* McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, 1986. $29.95. This collection of 22 interviews describes television producing from its commercial inception and film-making to the incidental extent that personalities started there (Chuck Jones) or passed through (David Wolper's *Hellstrom Chronicles*). Most of the talking dates from about 1980. Many are reminiscences. Almost all deal with network and syndication production, although Michael Wiese describes both *Hardware Wars* and overseeing break pieces for The Movie Channel. A short biography introduces each interview, but some prefacing remarks might usefully have pointed up each producer's special emphasis. For example. Frederic Ziv: the evolution of syndication; Bob Stabler: the course of a TV genre, from Hoppy to *Gunsmoke* to *Have Gun;* Chuck Jones: defining character by movement; Imre Horvath: editing and the unions; Perry Wolff: ethics and legalities of TV documentary; Agnes Nixon: daytime soaps; Earl Hammer, Jr.: controlling a long-lived series (*The Waltons*). Buried among the top-of-the-head philosophies are some wry insights and thoughtful pauses. —J.F.

Burchill, Julie. *Girls on Film.* New York: Pantheon, 1986. Rock and culture critic Julie Burchill feels that if men can have picture books of their male movie idols, women should be allowed their own narcissistic fantasies. Although involved in part with feminism's appropriation of the male gaze, Burchill's project is an often mean-spirited conjunction of Kenneth Anger and the coffee-table book.

—CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Chambers, Everett. *Producing TV Movies.* New York: Prentice Hall, 1986. $24.95. Brief introduction from an old hand.

Coburn, Randy Sue. *Trouble in Mind.* Alive Press, 8271 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90069. $6.95. Novelization of Alan Rudolph's intriguing film about low life in a Rain City of the unpleasant future. —E.C.

Curran, Trisha. *Financing Your Film: A Guide for Independent Filmmakers and Producers.* New York: Praeger, 1986. $29.95 cloth, $12.95 paper. Useful information, including sample prospectus, budget, and many inside anecdotes. —E.C.

De Navacelle, Thierry. *Woody Allen: On Location.* New York: Morrow, 1987. $18.95 cloth. Allen's shoots are almost legendarily familial, and the crew/cast/family changes remarkably little from film to film. This diary of the making of *Radio Days* usefully conveys, through its implacable day-by-day literalness, the workaday tedium of the production process: the endless waiting, the niggling over grand and minute arrangements, the coffee, the hurried lunches, the bodies hurtling in vans to the next location, anxieties over performances, changes in plans (Allen's shoots are very flexible), the time pressure, the waiting for weather and set redressing and the building of tracks—all the complexities which make it seem a small miracle that movies get made at all. Of Allen's thoughts, however, though it is reported he thinks a lot, we learn nothing. With continuity, credits, and interspersed headlines from the period the film was in production. —E.C.

Dickinson, Leo. *Filming the Impossible: Travels in Search of Adventure.* London: Jonathan Cape, [1982], 1986. Dist. by Salem House Publishers, Mercedes Distribution Center, Inc., Brooklyn, NY 11231. $15.95. Ballooning, mountain-climbing, skydiving, etc.

Drummond, Phillip, and Richard Paterson. *Television in Transition.* London: British Film Institute, 1985. Dist. by University of Illinois Press. $23.95. These papers from the First International Television Studies Conference include brilliantly depressing analyses of the interpenetration of media, government, and corporations, but there are also some fitful gleams of hope: TV in Quebec, for instance, was a major liberating factor from conservative-clerical hegemony. —E.C.

Eyles, Allen. *Sherlock Holmes: A Centenary Celebration.* New York: Harper & Row, 1986. $22.50. Veteran film critic Eyles reviews not only the cinematic (and TV) manifestations of Holmes, but Doyle's life and publishing career.

Gabbard, Krin and Glen O. Gabbard. *Psychiatry and the Cinema.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Good Shrinks. Bad shrinks. Funny shrinks. Shrinks who throw their arms around you and the ones who nod or nod off. Shrinks who tell patients to adjust and those rebelling themselves. The authors are a professor and a psychiatrist. By their measures, Hollywood oversimplified psychiatry like everything else, and who would argue? Part I covers a history of the American product. It proposes an initial period when psychiatrists were largely played for humor, as plot contrivances, and (*Spellbound, The Dark Mirror*) in functions little different from anybody else except for some mumbo-jumbo. The Golden Age of the fifties and early sixties (*Fear Strikes Out, David and Lisa*) both idealized and demystified the profession. Later professionals can be anything from transvestites (*Dressed to Kill*) to antiheroes (*The President's Analyst*) and werewolves (*The Howling*). A running argument holds psychiatry to have always been digested into melodramatic and generic forms toward the ends of reassurance and obfuscation. Part II begins with some talk about Lacan and sutures but settles for a more or less orthodox and modest psychoanalytic approach. We are reminded that Freud's own studies in biography, art, and literature claimed only psychoanalytical validity, not historical truth. *All That Jazz* and *Stardust Memories* are considered as movie (i.e., fictive) autobiography, *King of Comedy, Zelig* and *The Purple Rose of Cairo* in terms of celebrity-fostered narcissism. Finally, *Alien* and *3 Women* are examined, Altman's film the more rewardingly. *King's Row* shows up in the extensive filmography but is never singled out for attention. I'd hoped finally to discover the contents of Freud's telegram declining a $100,000 offer from Sam Goldwyn to cooperate in a feature tracing famous love stories through the ages, but still no luck.

Footnotes to Chapter Two: In *Hypnotist's Revenge* (Biograph 1907), a young man is embarrassed by a stage mesmerist. Eileen Bowser says that around 1912 many films used hypnotism as a plot device. Porter made a cover version of Biograph's *The Escaped Lunatic* in 1904. Billy Bitzer is credited with the 1906 *Dr. Dippy's Sanitarium* which, incidentally, was based on a comic strip. The movies continued traditions; they didn't invent them.

—JOHN FELL

Gavin, Thomas. *The Last Film of Emile Vico.* New York: Viking, 1986. $17.95. Ambitious thirties-Hollywood novel, reminiscent in tone of *Prater Violet,* but messed up with a schizoid narrator-cameraman —E.C.

Godard, Jean-Luc. *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard.* Paris: Editions de l'Étoile-Cahiers du

Cinéma, 1985 (in French). This French-language compendium joins a long list of books (in both French and English) dedicated to regurgitating everything (or nearly everything) that Godard has ever written, said (in interviews), or assembled (such as still photos taken during the shooting of his films) over 35 years of work in the cinema. Included here are the early Godard essays of film criticism (on Hitchcock, Ray, Rossellini, Mizoguchi, etc.), all the interviews Godard has ever given to *Cahiers du Cinéma,* plus assorted working notes (never before published) from his most recent films. It may be more than you ever wanted to know and were afraid to ask, but there are a few insights to be gleaned here about the cinema according to Saint Jean-Luc.

—JAMES ROY MacBEAN

Gurevitch, Michael, and Mark R. Levy, eds. *Mass Communication Review Yearbook.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1986. A 658-page collection of papers applying social science methodologies to the media.

Harcourt, Amanda, et al. *The Independent Producer: Film and Television.* Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986. $16.95 paper. Because of TV, the independent production sector is growing in Britain, and this is a guide for people working in it, with emphasis on financial and legal matters.

Kaplan, Louis, et al. *Gumby.* New York: Harmony Books, 1986. $12.95 paper. Plot summaries and reminiscences about the popular TV clay hero.

Kobal, John, series ed. *Legends: Clark Gable.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1986, $14.95 paper. Like the following title, a feast of glamor portraits.

_____, series ed. *Legends: Joan Crawford.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1986. $14.95 paper.

Kraus, Sidney, and Richard M. Perloff, eds. *Mass Media and Political Thought: An Information-processing Approach.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1985. Heavy-duty social science research; includes an intriguing discussion of "facial displays" on TV and their (mixed) political effects: Jackson and Reagan did better than Mondale, in case you hadn't noticed. —E.C.

Levy, Emanuel. *And the Winner Is . . . : The History and Politics of the Oscar Awards.* New York: Ungar, 1987. $19.50. If you really want to understand the background of what Vincent Canby called (perfectly accurately, in my opinion) "all that nonsense," sociologist Levy has produced a study which completely surpasses previous compilations and ruminations on the subject. He analyzes the economics of winning, the intricacies of the selection process, political and genre bias, the motivations of award refusers, the emotional effects of losing and winning, and the yearly vagaries of the awards. Most of Levy's attention goes to performers, an accurate reflection of the fact that the auteur theory established a modest beachhead in Hollywood but certainly did not win the war. He is dry and sensible in his own (rare) judgments: Elizabeth Taylor may have won for *Butterfield 8* because, as she said, "I had come within a breath of dying of pneumonia," but Levy acknowledges that it is not the worst performance honored by an Oscar. Generally his understanding of the industry's relations with American society is sound, and when he falters it's surprising; for example, he doesn't realize that Chaplin's vast unpopularity in certain circles went far back before *The Great Dictator.* And he is good, and suitably wry, about describing the aberrations of the awards over the years. It's a story which could certainly qualify, in Shaw's phrase, as one of "folly and panic." —E.C.

McLaughlin, Margaret L., ed. *Communication Yearbook 9.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1986.

MacPherson, Don and Louise Brody. *Leading Ladies.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $25.00. All the way to Sigourney Weaver, Nastassja Kinski, and Debra Winger: gorgeous photos, gushy text. —E.C.

Palmer, William J. *The Films of the Seventies: A Social History.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1987. $25.00, cloth. This look at films released between 1966 and the early 1980s is "based on one straightforward premise: that movies both reflect and comment upon the society in which they are made." Here, this troublingly bald assumption leads to little of value, ignoring as it does production mechanisms. Palmer, who is professor of English at Rutgers and film reviewer for Gannett newspapers, intends a spirited apologia for contemporary Hollywood—which, iconoclastically, he finds to have grappled with political issues "with perception, involvement and impact." The films examined are presumed to reflect on US society, although one of the nine chapters is devoted to *Blow-Up* and another to "Australian War Movies." The approach flattens the films, so that *The Wild Bunch* and *Once Upon a Time in the West* arrive at the same unexpected message: "corporate villainy." The longest sections are devoted to *Chinatown* and *Apocalypse Now;* the most interesting to a defense of "the forgotten Vietnam film," *Go Tell the Spartans.*

—SCOTT SIMMON

Pettigrew, Terence. *Raising Hell: The Rebel in the Movies.* New York: St. Martin's, 1986. $17.95. Retellings of films with bad guys in them, plus a lot of others thrown in for no apparent reason. —E.C.

Porter, Melinda Camber. *Through Parisian Eyes: Reflections on Contemporary French Arts and Culture.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. $18.95. Porter is perky and persistent, but her preparation for interviewing film-makers is slight. About half of the book concerns film (1975-1985). —E.C.

Rose, Brian G. *Television and the Performing Arts:*

A Handbook and Reference Guide to American Cultural Programming. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986. $35.00 How dance, classical music, opera, and theater have fared on the tube.

Rosengren, Karl Erik et al., eds. *Media Gratifications Research: Current Perspectives.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985. The work done in social-science terms on media (including film) may seem pedantic to the more humanities-inclined academic film community, but both might learn something from the other. —E.C.

Silverstone, Roger. *Framing Science: The Making of a BBC Documentary.* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986. $24.95 cloth, $14.95 paper. "The story of, if such a thing exists, normal [British] television." How film-makers coped with recent ominous developments in world agribusiness.

Slide, Anthony, ed. *Filmfront.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986. $15.00 cloth. Annotated reprint of the doughty magazine of the Film & Photo League during the Depression; with an introduction by David Platt, one of the founders.

Warren, Jon R. *Warren's Movie Poster Price Guide.* New York: Harmony Books, 1986. $12.95 paper. A one-sheet on *Sabotage* might bring you $400, and then again it might not. A guide for the wary collector.

Weidman, Jerome. *Praying for Rain.* New York: Harper & Row, 1986. $18.95. Weidman's Hollywood memories are minimal: a couple of Sidney Skolsky vignettes, such as being cajoled by Skolsky and Cantor into script-doctoring *The Eddie Cantor Story* simultaneously with the six weeks Weidman had to write a Bugsy Siegel movie for Jerry Wald. Elsewhere, this memoir proves far more interesting. The author, whose first success was *I Can Get It For You Wholesale,* passes time with the *New Yorker* staff, Simon and Schuster of *Simon and Schuster,* Robert Sherwood and the OWI, Somerset Maugham, Faulkner, Bennett Cerf, George Abbott and Dashiell Hammett. In the process, Weidman never loses sight of likenesses between the Lower East Side where he started and the other worlds he inhabited, writing equally skillully about them all. —JOHN FELL

Whelan, Richard. *Robert Capa.* New York: Knopf, 1985. $19.95. Still photographers' relation to movies is an intriguing footnote to film history. Some, like Man Ray, used the medium to experiment. Some pocketed the money while retaining political allegiances; Paul Strand and Ralph Steiner worked on *The Plow That Broke the Plains.* Cartier-Bresson assisted Renoir on *La Vie est à nous* and *Une Partie de campagne.* Capa's connections to film appear incidentally in this biography, first during the Spanish Civil War, then working with Joris Ivens on *The Four Hundred* ostensibly to do stills, but also serving as a second cameraman. He volunteered pictures and ideas to occasional *March of Time* segments, and drew a salary for a little while as a writer and apprentice director-producer for International Pictures. In *Too Hot to Handle,* Clark Gable bears some resemblance to Capa, whose personal view of Hollywood was succinct. "Considering the time, patience, and talent used to make shit, it is very painful."

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BEST FRENCH FILM BOOKS, 1986-1987

by Paul R. Michaud

Although the French publishing industry is continuing to break away from its past allergic reaction to film books and has in the past year published more than ever, my listing this year is much shorter and aims at being more selective. This task is much eased by the clearly defined line that exists between books of a high quality (which often sell at very high prices) and those much more mediocre; the books one finds in the following list are definitely of the first category. They can often be purchased through university bookstores, or directly from French and European Publications, 610 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10020.

Philippe Arnaud, *Robert Bresson,* Editions de l'Etoile-Cahiers du Cinéma. Winner of this year's *Prix Art et Essai.*

Olivier Barrot and Raymond Chirat, *Inoubliables! Visages du cinéma français, 1930-1950,* Calmann-Lévy.

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Le Cinéma italien, Centre Georges Pompidou.

Another title in this fine series published to accompany retrospectives at the Centre Beaubourg.

Cinémathèque Française, *Les Restaurations de la Cinémathèque Française,* published by itself. An extremely interesting book on this French institution's recent efforts to restore some of its otherwise lost treasures.

Jean-Pierre Coursodon, *Buster Keaton,* Atlas/Lherminier. As with anything signed by Lherminier, extremely well done.

Hervé Dalmais, *Truffaut,* Rivages-Cinéma. One wonders what justified publication of this monograph on a film *auteur* already widely analyzed in such excellent works as Dominique Fanne's study published by Cerf. But then, it does come as a breath of fresh air after some rather pompous (and overpriced) works by Dominique Rabourdin and Cahiers du Cinéma.

Serge Daney, *Ciné-Journal,* Cahiers du Cinéma. A collection of Daney's articles that appeared principally in *Libération,* but the volume's real value lies in Gilles Deleuze's stimulating introduction.

Georges Debot, *Gaby Morlay,* France-Empire. About the French screen star.

Robert Florey, *Hollywood Village,* Pygmalion. By the French director, who died in 1979, associated with the early days of Hollywood.

Geneviève Guillaume-Grimaud, *Le Cinéma du front populaire,* Lherminier. About French cinema of the late 1930s, its relationship to society of that day, and a special look at Jean Renoir as he was in 1936.

Philippe d'Hugues and Dominique Muller, *Gaumont. 90 Ans de cinéma,* published jointly by Ramsay and the Cinémathèque Française.

Peter Kral, *Les Burlesques ou parade des somnambules,* Stock-Cinéma. Highly original essay by one of the leading specialists of the burlesque film.

Rudolf Kurtz, *Expressionnisme et cinéma,* Presses universitaires de Grenoble. Originally published in 1926, this book influenced Lotte H. Eisner to write her landmark work *L'Ecran démoniaque.*

Ado Kyrou, *Le Surréalisme au cinéma,* Ramsay. Reprint of a classic.

Georges Langlois and Glenn Myrent, *Henri Langlois, Premier citoyen du cinéma,* Denoel. By Langlois's younger brother, a biography that reveals many unknown aspects of the life of the founder of the Cinémathèque Française, dead already ten years.

Henri Langlois, *300 Ans de cinéma,* Cahiers du Cinéma and Cinémathèque Française. A collection of articles by Langlois.

E. Larraz, *Le Cinéma espagnol des origines à nos jours,* Editions du Cerf.

Roger Léenhardt, *Chroniques de cinéma,* Cahiers du Cinéma. The definitive collection of articles written from 1934 by the man who would be the true father of the Nouvelle Vague.

Claude Lelouch (with Y. Flot), *Ma Vie pour un film,* Lherminier. Memoirs.

Jacques Lodge and J. R. Taylor, *Hollywood des années 30 et 40,* C.I.L.

Jean-Marc Loubier, *Louis Jouvet,* Editions Ramsay. A nicely documented book on the French actor; reads like a novel.

Jacques Lourcelles, *Dictionnaire du Cinéma,* Laffont Bouquins. After excellent volumes on directors, screenwriters, and producers, Laffont's "Bouquins" collections has come out with a tome on films themselves—long awaited, but well worth the wait.

Pierre Louys et le Cinéma, Editions A. L'écart, c/o William Théry, Route de la Gare, 51140 Muizon. The relationship between the film and Louys, one of France's foremost erotic writers.

Ernst Lubitsch, Cahiers du Cinéma and Cinémathèque Française. Collection of articles on Lubitsch that appeared originally in *Cahiers.*

Marcel Martin, *Le Langage cinématographique,* Editions du Cerf. Updated reprinting of one of the seminal volumes on cinema.

George Méliès, *Une Exposition de photos de films restaurés par la Cinémathèque Française, Catalogue dans la collection "Photocopies," Textes de Henri Langlois, René Clair, Madeleine Malthête-Méliès, Jacques Malthête, Noëlle Giret,* copublished by the Centre National de la Photographie and the Cinémathèque Française.

Jean Narboni and Noel Simsolo, *Il était une fois Samuel Fuller. Histoires d'Amérique racontées par Samuel Fuller.* Cahiers du Cinéma. An excellent and engrossing book-length interview with the American director.

Dominique Noguez, *Une Renaissance du cinéma,* Klincksieck. The history, both economic and esthetic, of American underground cinema.

Marcel Oms, *La Guerre d'Espagne au cinéma,* Editions du Cerf. Myths and realities on the subject.

———, *Le Moyen Age au cinéma,* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque.

Jean-Pierre Pagliano, *Paul Grimault,* Lherminier. About the French animation genius.

Jean-Claude Pascal, *Le Beau Masque,* Laffont. Memoirs of a French character actor especially associated with the cinema of the 1950s and Brigitte Bardot, who got his start in 1947 as a designer for Dior.

Jena-Loup Passek, with Michel Ciment, Claude Michel Cluny and Jean-Pierre Frouard, *Dictionnaire du cinéma,* Larousse. Not just another dictionary of the film, but one of the best if not most complete.

Michel Perez, *Les Films de Carné,* Editions Ramsay.

Claude-Jean Phillippe, *Le Roman du cinéma,* Edi-

tions Fayard. Volume two on the years 1938 through 1945 written by one of France's master film raconteurs.

Jean Pierrot, *Marguerite Duras,* José Corti. A chronological look at the works of the screenwriter of Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour.*

Polanski par Polanski, Editions du Chêne. Done with Pierre-André Boutang, interviews with the Polish-French director, accompanied by numerous photos, but perhaps over-illustrated and over-priced.

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Correspondence and Controversy

Reply to Bordwell & Thompson

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in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema,* though like my other articles David Bordwell read it soon after it was published, I summarized A.S.L.s for nearly 400 sound films, and presented a clear picture of the norms and dispersion for this particular variable; i.e., the "paradigmatic range of choice" in use by filmmakers in the various six-year periods I illustrated. Yet typically Bordwell and Thompson, on page 60 of their book, give the absence of such a feature as a good reason for ignoring my work. And in 1977 they had still not actually done anything about establishing stylistic norms and differences, they had merely mentioned the idea in passing a few more times.

When after this they finally tried to select a random sample of films from 1916 to 1960 to establish norms, what they achieved was far from "unbiased," even with respect to the surviving films, as a glance at their breakdown by studio and period shows to anyone who has not only some idea about statistical sampling, but also of what is contained in the world's film archives. Because of faulty sampling technique, it is in fact a markedly non-random sample from the films they could lay their hands on easily, particularly all those Warner Brothers films in their Wisconsin archive. Worse than this for their claims, nearly all of the generalizations about the developments in American film style and its norms in their book are in fact *not* based on their "unbiased sample," but on their "extended sample," which was very definitely hand-picked by them for their own purposes. Their "extended sample" is not specified, even as to size year by year, though it is certainly smaller than even my 1977 *FQ* sound film sample, let alone that in my 1983 book *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis.* (Now in paperback at $15. Covers up to 1970, and deals with European cinema too. A quarter of a million original words, and none wasted in laboring the obvious about narration, or anything else. The bargain of the century.) As a result of the shortcomings of their sample, Bordwell and Thompson markedly underestimate the range of stylistic variation in A.S.L. at any particular time, most obviously in their treatment of the fifties and the introduction of 'Scope. Other formal variables treated quantitatively in my pre-1983 papers they do nothing about. Another way my statistical work is misrepresented is in the matter of my using a section of film 30 minutes or greater (and greater than 200 shots) to estimate the overall A.S.L., though a proportion of such results of mine have always been from complete films. In fact I briefly demonstrated the justification for this sectional sampling in my original 1974 article, which discussion Bordwell ignores. This is what repeatedly happens on the occasions when Bordwell and Thompson refer to my work: it is misrepresented and then there is the suggestion that it is not worth looking at. If they were really interested in advancing knowledge, they would have dealt with these matters, rather than concealing them.

When we turn to early cinema, their 1979 book *Film Art* was content to reproduce the traditional lazy errors about Porter and Griffith inventing everything. Yet in my 1976 "The Early Development of Film Form," I outlined for the first time the development of the key constitutional stylistic features of mainstream cinema up to 1918 (I intentionally avoided the expression "classical cinema," since I felt it was already devalued by loose usage), namely forms of movement continuity from shot to shot, directional continuity, reverse-angle cutting, the introduction of dialogue titles, and non-frontal stagings at Vitagraph. No historians had discussed the emergence of these features before, and the previous consideration of the other features I discussed there such as scene dissection, flashback construction, naturalism in acting, camera movement, and all aspects of film lighting, had been inadequate. I did this not by reading other people's work, but by viewing about 200 films, most of which no one had heard about or considered before, and from these I selected a smaller number of films to illustrate my novel generalizations. For the 1909–1918 period these unknown films included *The Fear, Rory O'Moore, The Loafer, An Ill Wind, After One Hundred Years, Weights and Measures, The Eagle's Mate, His Phantom Sweetheart, Detective Burton's Triumph, A Tale of Two Cities,* and *Love's Awakening (A Friendly Marriage).* In 1979 Kristin Thompson came to the National Film Archive, mentioned my work to the Viewing Officer, Elaine Burrows, and asked to see those films, along with some others from the period. Yet at the end of 1985 Kristin Thompson told an audience gathered here in London to be sold their book that "Noël Burch and Barry Salt were working on this area at the same time as us, but we were not aware of this," and when challenged about the above films, said, as she says in the *FQ* Winter letter that ". . . I just happened to come across these films because we were working in the same archives." In fact the National Film Archive had about 300 viewing copies of American films from the 1909–1917 period in 1979, not "a limited number of titles," and so the odds against lighting on those ten films by chance were rather large.

Introducing her treatment of the first twenty years on pages 157 to 159 of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985), Kristin Thompson gives the impression that she is the first to give a full and correct objective treatment of formal developments, though in fact she is using my 1976 article, and also my 1978 "Film Form 1900–1906," and the films in them, as guides, without mentioning this. Inevitably Thompson comes to the same conclusions, but she tries to cover this up by pretending that I got it wrong when she does mention these articles later in connection with a few specific points in footnotes. To take one instance, when discussing the introduction of dialogue titles (p. 185), her mention of my article, tucked away in a footnote as usual, says "Barry Salt has suggested that the placement of dialogue titles at the point in the scene where they are spoken was minority practice *around 1911 to 1913.*" (my emphasis) In fact what Barry Salt wrote was, "By 1911 the use of dialogue titles was fairly common, though not in Griffith's films, but although some are at the point between shots where they would be heard, most are not, and it is doubtful that the principle had yet been

realised." This exactly accords with the evidence Thompson produces, despite the very small sample of films she is considering. This misrepresentation of what I wrote is followed by the statement that my work is wrong because I ignored written sources. In fact, a decade ago, when I started on my work I went through the trade papers for this period, and discovered that there were no contemporary references to the introduction of the major features of mainstream cinema *at the time that they happened,* and often no references even much later. Nor have Bordwell and Thompson been able to find any stylistic developments that I missed out because my primary method was working through the viewing of thousands of films. In the particular case of dialogue titles, all Thompson has been able to find and quote in their book are discussions in 1911 and 1912 of the placement of *narrative* titles, and a 1913 quote saying of dialogue titles ". . . they should be made to follow the action . . .", which certainly does not describe the majority practice in 1913.

On the other hand, where I went seriously wrong in 1976, through believing the traditional publicity accounts, was in my ascription of the introduction of chiaroscuro lighting for expressive purposes to Alvin Wyckoff working for De Mille in 1915. Thompson follows my 1976 account in believing this, whereas in fact there are many previous examples of low key or "Rembrandt lighting" years before this, at Vitagraph and elsewhere. Naturally I get this right in my book, with plenty of illustrations.

Kristin Thompson does attempt to improve on my work, as is only right, but when she discusses the final scene of *Detective Burton's Triumph* (now known to be *The Bank Burglar's Fate,* directed by Jack Adolfi), and builds a big argument on the reverse-angle cutting she sees in this scene, she goes badly wrong. As can be seen from the frame enlargements in their book, not to mention the film itself, there are no reverse-angle shots in this scene, it is all shot from the same side on a two-walled L-shaped set. Up to this point my observations have mostly borne on the ethics of Bordwell and Thompson's doings, but now we are talking about a point of major importance for the study of film history: their lack of technical competence. This is confirmed by many examples throughout their book, in the first place by the major topics in the development of film style that they miss, such as the reduction of depth of field in studio shooting from 1918 onwards, the use of double backlighting likewise, the introduction of duplicating stock and its consequences, the development of the insert shot (and its vital relation to film narration), the reduction of lens diffusion in the late forties, and etc., etc. The effects of these developments are visible in some of the films they illustrate, but they can't see them. Then there are the other terrible errors they commit because of their lack of technical knowledge, such as the description of the foot pedals on the Bell & Howell semi-automatic splicer (which actually actuate the clamps) as being "to run the film through" (Ill. 21.3), the Bell & Howell continuous printer as using the intermittent "shuttle gate" mechanism (page 252), the main lights in the foreground of illustration 17.41 are reflector-type spotlights, not floodlights, Illus. 28.1 given as an example of the *absence* of backlighting in color films visibly shows the presence of backlighting, and so on and on and on. But how to deal with this problem for the advancement of knowledge of film style and technology? For when confronted with their mistakes Bordwell and Thompson's reaction is as in their letter, where Thompson attempts to conceal that she *does* give the 1919 *TSMPE* article I mentioned as an example of standard contemporary lighting practice, as you can read on page 412 of their book, with no mention of the number of lights at Vitagraph. But the inadequacies and misleading nature of the coverage of such matters in the technical journals, which are ignorantly accepted as Holy Writ by Bordwell and Thompson, and then further misinterpreted by them, needs a long article in itself. —BARRY SALT

Salt II

Readers (if any remain) of this tiresome controversy may not have the stamina to return to the original texts. We want to point out that, with the exceptions noted below, Salt has conceded our previous points simply by neglecting to rebut them. He initially claimed that we used his ideas without citing him, but we showed that he was indeed cited. He claimed that Thompson's section of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* "tells the same story" as does his 1976 article; we showed that it did not. He charged that she used "exactly the same previously unknown films" he did; we showed that she did not. He asserted that she used inadequate documentation for certain points; we showed that she did not. On all these matters, Salt now remains silent. But he is unfazed. He prefers to occupy his time, our time, and your time with more invective. Once more, as a matter of principle, we feel obliged to reply, and since it takes less space to fling an unsupported charge than to mount a supported defense, we must presume once more on the reader's patience.

First, the exceptional passages in which Salt does address our rejoinder.

1. He answers our claim that we have not denigrated him by assuming that a passage, from Thompson's review of the book *Cinema 1900/1906* is a "sneer" at him. Yet he assumes wrongly. Anyone who cares to read the quotation in its original context (*Iris,* Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 142) will realize that it criticizes only Noël Burch's contribution to that work. Burch, who claimed to be doing a *non*-evolutionary history of the early cinema, contributed a highly evolutionary account. Salt, on the other hand, labelled his essay "Evolution of the Film Form Up To 1906" and gave a consistently evolutionary description. Burch contradicted his own premises, while Salt was completely true to his: that was the point. Thompson's reference to Salt's own essay (p. 141) is approving, placing him in a group of authors who contribute to the revision of traditional film history.

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the concept of norms as such into the concept of *statistical* norms. We are concerned, like the Russian and Prague poeticians, with both qualitative and quantitative norms, as a glance at any of our work since 1976 will show. The notion of average shot length, which we do use in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* and do attribute to Salt (as we indicated in our first response), is only a part of a much broader account of a paradigmatic set of options. We do not, frankly, consider quantitative norms to be as important as Salt does; witness our neglect of his other quantitative dimensions, such as shot-scale. (For a brief discussion of the relevance of quantitative norms to stylistic study, see Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film,* p. 152.)

3. Salt does not acknowledge our demonstration that Thompson's citations of films from the pre-1918 period overlap in only a small number of cases with his citations, and that many of those titles are previously known classics. He now narrows his charge, listing fewer than a dozen titles that overlap, all of which are in the National Film Archive in London. He estimates that in 1979, when Thompson did her research, the Archive held about 300 viewing prints. Whether this is a "limited number" the reader must judge for him or herself. Thompson viewed just over 50 titles, or about one-sixth, during her two-week research stay in 1979. Given that Salt lives in London and dedicates his book to the National Archive, he presumably had seen a considerable proportion of these films. It is therefore hardly surprising that he and Thompson saw a dozen or more of the same titles there. Certainly Thompson did not, as Salt implies, ask viewings coordinator Elaine Burrows to show her all the films used in Salt's article; she did, however, use the same list of available viewing prints, shown her by Ms. Burrows. To the best of Thompson's recollection, the only film she viewed specifically because Salt mentioned it was *The Loafer,* as an early instance of shot/reverse shot, and, again, she cited Salt on this example. Salt's reply ignores entirely the point in our previous reply that most of Thompson's references to these films do not use them *for the same purpose* that his article did. One must conclude that Salt thinks that anyone viewing these same films, for whatever ends, must inevitably cite him—as if viewing them for the first time in modern days had conferred a sort of copyright privilege on him. (Which reminds us that Salt also never answers our original point about his failure to cite any previous authors, including those, like Kemp Niver, who *have* made the same points he has.)

Finally, Salt claims that there are ten offending titles on his list, but he in fact mentions eleven. This should embarrass a writer who stakes his reputation on quantitative research.

So much for his attempts to address the points made in our first reply. Now we turn to his new round of unfounded, unsupported charges.

Few readers will be interested in squabbles about the sort of esoteric points Salt makes, but they have symptomatic importance. Originally, Salt wanted to claim that we stole from him. That claim did not hold up. Now he uses the occasion of a reply to snipe at small, putative inaccuracies without having to go to the trouble to analyze our book properly. In effect, he writes a mini-review. By contrast, our own discussion of *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* was recently published in the *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* ("Toward a Scientific Film History?" in Vol. 10, no. 3 [Summer 1985]: 224–237). There we examined his book in detail, drawing on evidence and using footnotes to support claims that differed from his. In his discussion of our book, we find no such effort to back up his criticisms. Indeed, it is remarkable that nearly all his criticisms of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* bear upon *stills illustrating the text;* the others refer to the Appendix or a few footnotes. There is no evidence that he has actually read the book. Still, this is progress. His first attack betrayed no familiarity with the book at all.

Salt's attempts to claim that Thompson both stole his ideas on early cinema and managed to get them completely wrong are wholly untenable. For example, if there are no references to intertitle usage in contemporary trade papers, as Salt asserts, how does Thompson manage to cite any? Thompson also does, contrary to Salt's claim, cite instances of low-key, or effects, lighting prior to De Mille's famous usage in 1915 (*The CHC,* pp. 223–224, also Figures 17.23, 17.24, and 17.29). Salt manages to make Thompson's analysis of a shot/reverse-shot scene in *Detective Burton's Triumph* "wrong" by claiming that it contains no "reverse-angles"—something he can do only by using his own very limited (and idiosyncratic) definition of shot/reverse shot as necessarily involving distinct changes of angles at each cut. We define shot/reverse shot as consisting of shots taken of characters at opposite ends of a 180-degree line. By this definition, which is in wide usage, the scene is exactly as Thompson describes it.

Salt goes on to attack our "technical competence." Each of his charges deserves separate rebuttal, but so as not to expand this discussion, we can reply to only a few examples. We fail, he says, to deal with "double backlighting." This was a new term to us, as it has never been in common usage or professional parlance. But, fearing we had overlooked something, we went to Salt's own book for enlightenment. There is no such term in his glossary/index or text. Presumably he is referring here to the use of "two backlights," beginning in 1919 (discussed in *Film Style & Technology,* pp. 141, 143). Given that backlighting can come from one lamp or from dozens, the adjective "double" seems a bit misleading. We preferred to discuss backlighting in terms of its effect on the screen; when backlight surrounds the figures in light and picks them out against the background, we used the Hollywood term, "rim" lighting: e.g., "By the end of the teens, films often extended and refined backlighting by using it to surround the entire figure—creating what was called 'rim' lighting" (*The CHC,* p. 225, also Figures 17.36 and 17.37). Again, Salt either has failed to read what we wrote, or he uses a different term (of his own invention) in order to pretend that we have committed some egregious error.

More unsupported claims follow. For example, Thompson's description of the Bell & Howell semi-automatic splicer was taken from a reliable contemporary source. Where is Salt's evidence for claiming that description is wrong? As to the "spotlights" in the foreground of Figure 17.41, Salt should surely be aware that the Sunlight Arc could be used as either a flood or a spot lamp, depending on the accessories used and the adjustment of the carbons. It is fairly evident that at least the righthand unit has a diffusion disc mounted on it, indicating *in this case* its use as a floodlight. He also claims that "Thompson attempts to conceal" a point about her use of a "1919 *TSMPE* article" Salt dismissed as "years out of date" in his original letter. Had he specified *which* reference to a 1919 article from the *Transactions of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* he meant, it might have made it possible for us to answer his charge; we assumed he meant the citation on p. 274 (fn 47). Now it turns out he meant the *other* reference to this 1919 article. Had we been able to read Salt's mind on this point, we could have stated to begin with that Diagram 9 in Appendix D (p. 412) seems to us a fair representation not only of a lighting set-up for 1919, but for any situation in a 1920s films where the effect desired is a strong sidelight from one side of an L-shaped set and a weaker one from the left rear, through windows in the set. Again, Salt asserts that this is out of date, but does not support his claim. (A photograph of a 1920s Lewis Selznick production reproduced on p. 178 of Salt's own book shows a rather similar lighting set-up to that in our Diagram 9, though there are more mercury-vapor lamps than arcs providing the main side light.) Our space here is limited, but these examples should suffice to indicate how we would reply to Salt's nit-picking.

Not content with misunderstanding our book, Salt moves to the realm in which he always seems most comfortable: personal attack. Both of the "quotations" Salt attributes to Thompson are his own fabrications. In her 1985 University of London Institute of Education lecture, Thompson did say that in the 1977–78 academic year, when she and her collaborators were formulating *The Classical Hollywood Cinema,* she was not aware that both Salt and Burch had independently concluded that the classical continuity system was in place by 1917. She was not, in fact, aware of this because she had not at that time read Salt's article. She did, of course, read it during the early stages of researching our book and had never pretended that she was unaware of his conclusions by the time she viewed films at the National Archive in October, 1979. (A tape of this lecture, along with Salt's original oral accusations against Thompson, Routledge & Kegan Paul, the BFI, and others, is on file at the Institute of Education.) The second "quotation" (". . . I just happened to come across . . .") appears neither in Thompson's talk nor in our previous response. Such fictitious quotations indicate the level of accuracy and care which characterizes the rest of Salt's claims.

Salt also implies that Thompson acted in a crassly commercial fashion when she gave a lecture, "Studying the Cinematic Institution: The Case of the Classical Hollywood Cinema" at the University of London Institute of Education in 1985 (co-sponsored by the Institute, the BFI, the Society for Education in Film and Television, and Routledge & Kegan Paul). The audience was there, he says, "to be sold their book." The audience was actually there to hear a lecture on the historical methods used in the writings of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* and Thompson's *Exporting Entertainment.* (One wonders, incidentally, given Salt's conviction that Thompson is incapable of doing her own work, from whom he thinks she stole the latter book's contents.) Copies of each book were available in the lobby afterwards, but there was no sales pitch. Such sales of books at academic functions are standard practice, we believe. Indeed, Salt's initial sales of his book were partly done at academic conferences where he was giving lectures. Moreover, in spite of his denigration of the BFI and his frequent reference to his own lack of institutional support, Salt himself wrote the program notes for a season of early features, "The Birth of the American Feature Film: The Other Story," which he programmed at the National Film Theatre in London. This series coincided with the appearance of Salt's book, which was prominently mentioned in the notes (see NFT program, February 1984, pp. 10–13). Were the audiences who came to these films there "to be sold his book"? Presumably not. Certainly Salt's parenthetical promotion of his book ("The bargain of the century") speaks for itself.

The reader's endurance, sorely tried by this affair, my be somewhat revived by a final piece of background information. The first version of Salt's reply, which was reluctantly shown to us by the Editor and his Editorial Board, was judged legally actionable by two attorneys whom we consulted. We pointed this out to the Editor, who had this opinion confirmed by the counsel he consulted. The Editor requested that Salt revise his reply to make it non-defamatory, and, within the letter of the law, Salt complied.

The incident is revelatory. There has never been a serious intellectual issue at stake in this controversy. Initially, Salt used the pretext of replying to a review of his book in order to abuse the British Film Institute, academic presses, and the community of American film scholars. Since we were named, we decided, at the advice of colleagues and friends, to defend our professional reputations, but this was undertaken on sheerly moral grounds. That Salt's original diatribe was published, that the Editor explicitly welcomed readers to write in with letters supporting Salt, that initially the Editor and Board refused to allow us to respond to Salt's new round of accusations or even to show it to us before its publication, that neither the Editor nor his Board detected the litigious aspects of his first version, and that Salt has been given yet another forum for his ungrounded assaults—all this suggests that on this occasion *Film Quarterly* has overlooked the difference between scholarly debate and mere mud-slinging.

[This exchange is now closed. —ED.]

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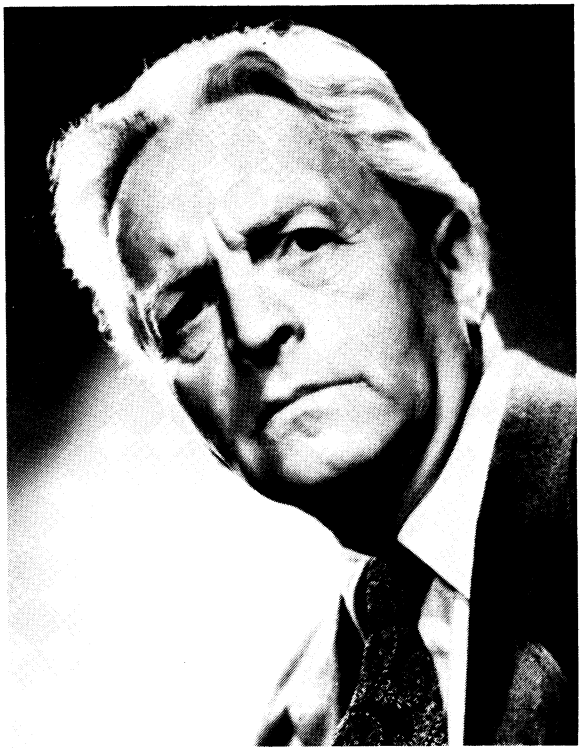

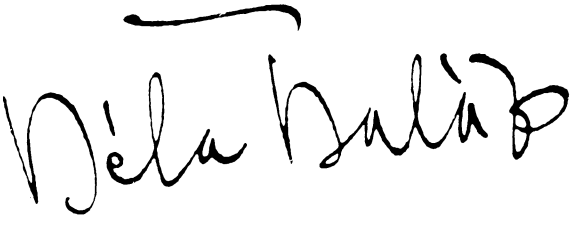

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